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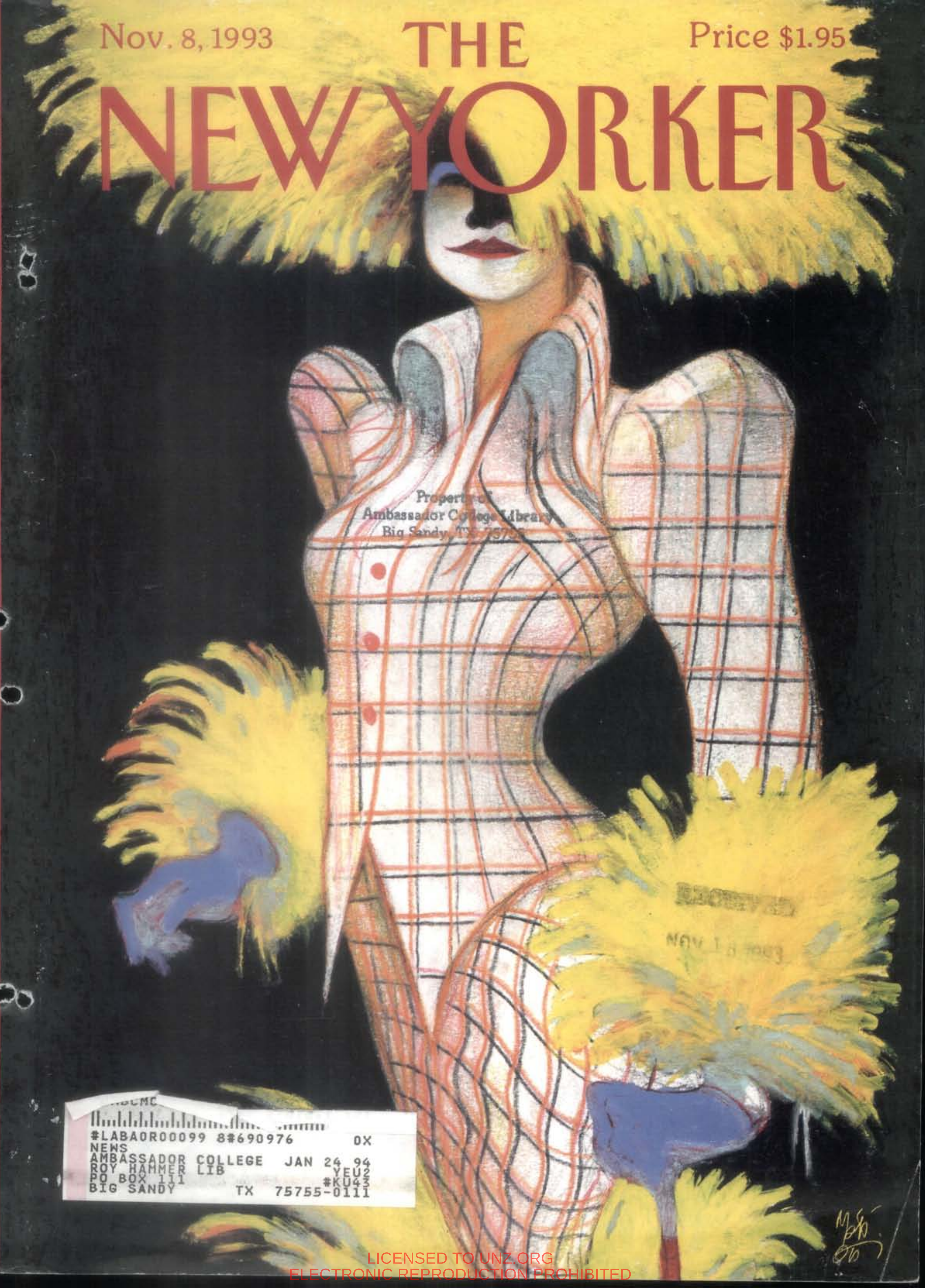

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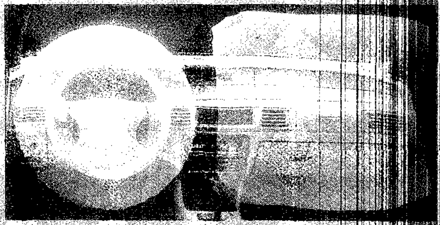

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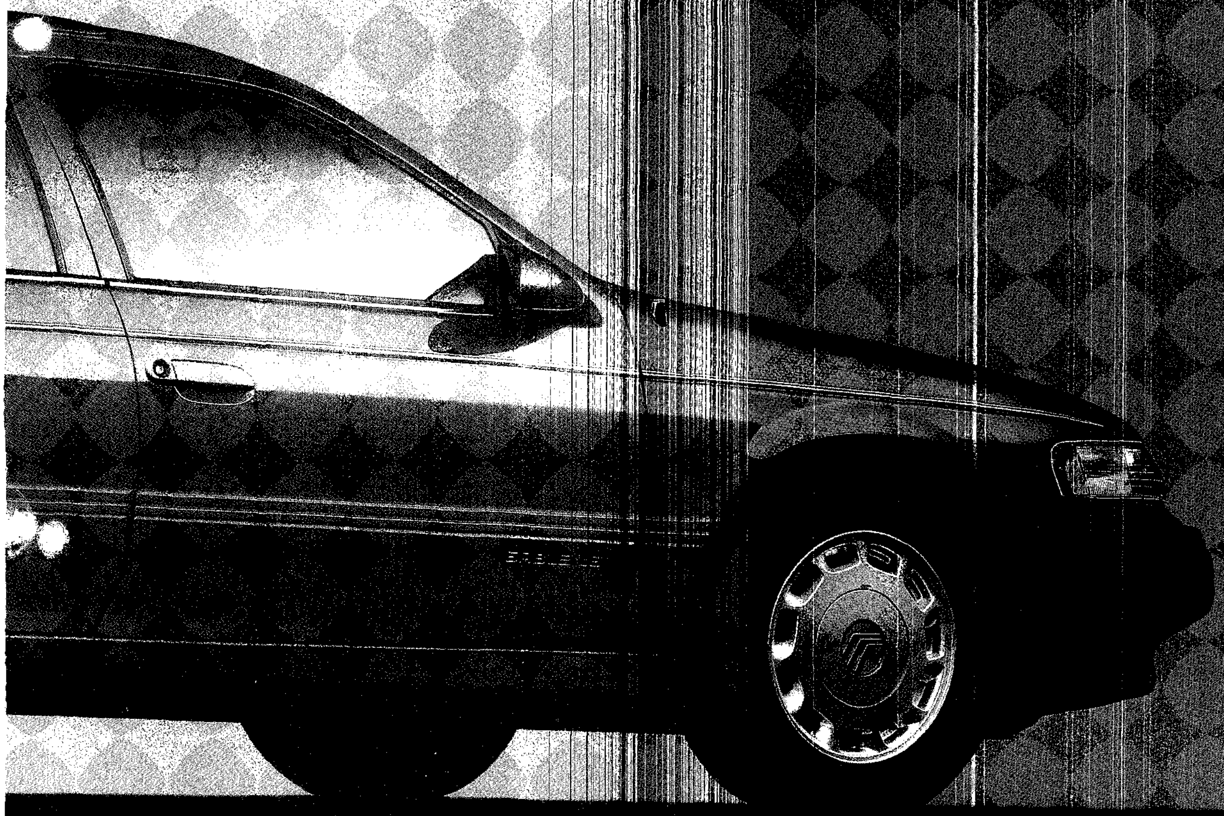

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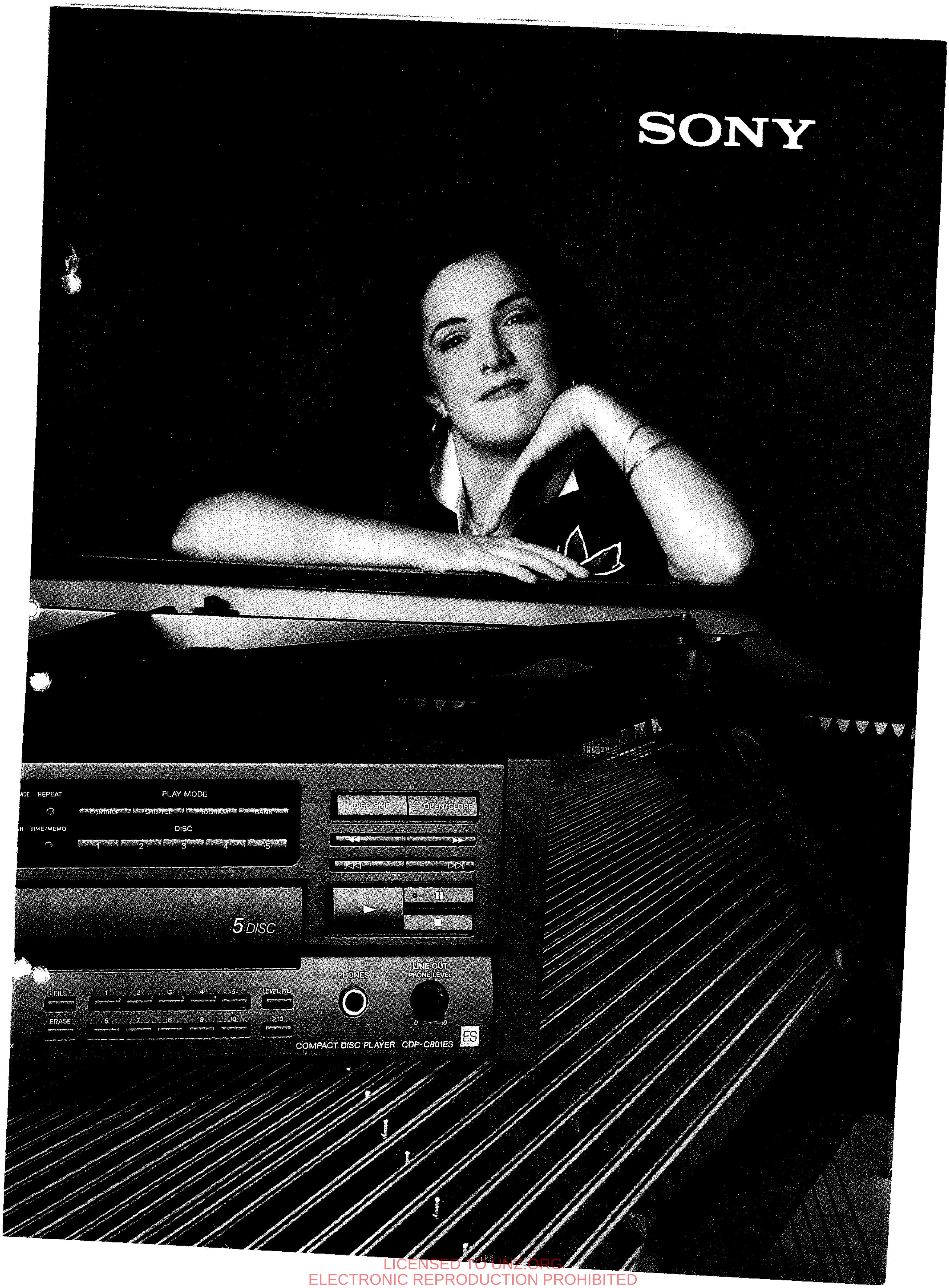
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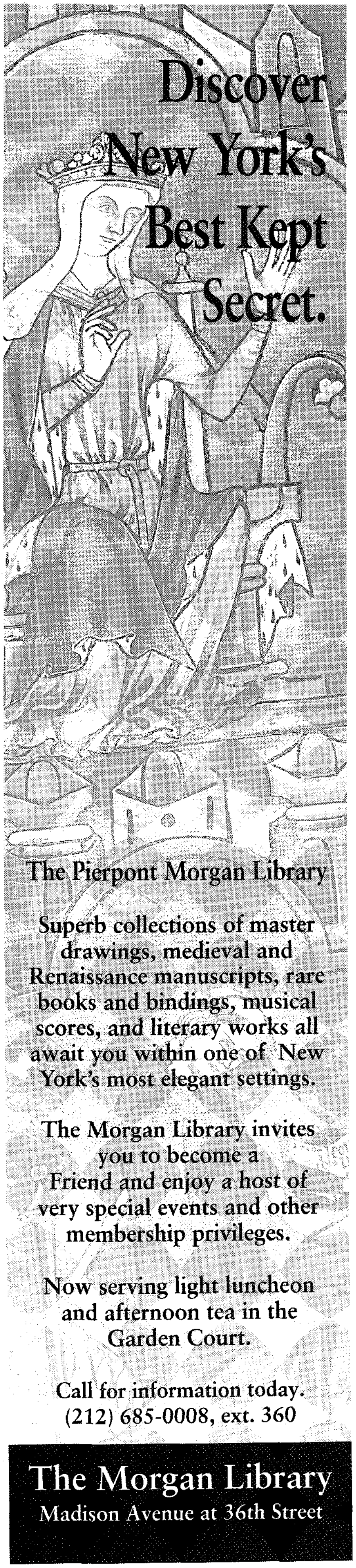

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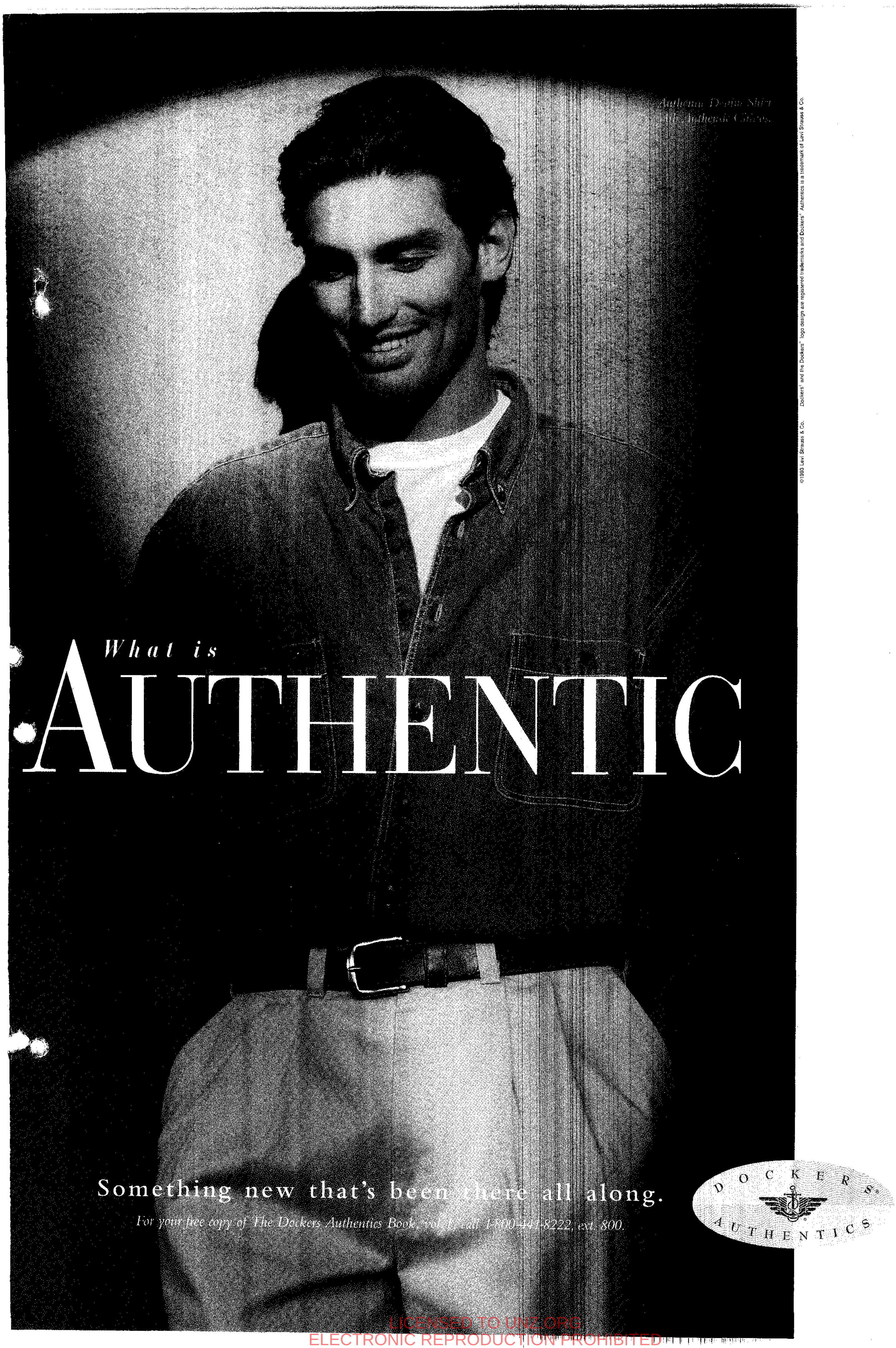
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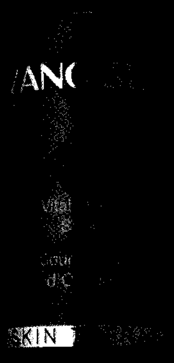

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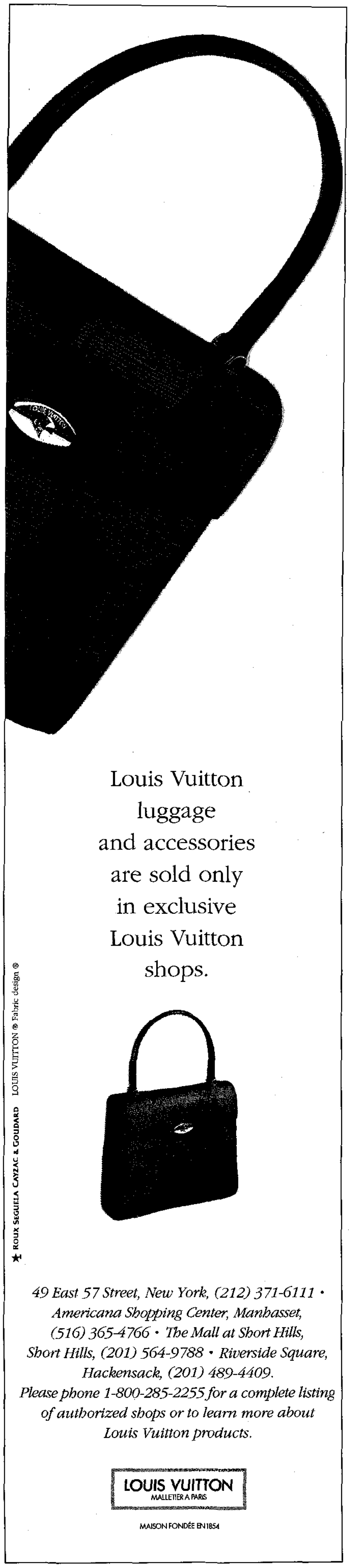

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COMMENT

SLOUCHING TOWARDS BOSNIA

Do the Bosnian Serbs, crouching by their cannons in the hills above Sarajevo, take their firing cues from Washington? Whenever the United States seems not to be paying attention, the Serbs resume shelling, coolly killing and maiming civilians until the Americans notice and insist that they stop. On October 16th, hardly a week after their leader, Radovan Karadžić, declared that he considered their war against the Bosnian Muslims over, the Serbs, observing that the Clinton Administration had its hands full with Somalia and Haiti, poured thousands of shells into the prostrate city. Secretary of State Warren Christopher thereupon issued the ritual threats of retaliatory air strikes. This is today the sum and substance of United States policy toward a genocide-in-progress in the heart of Europe. Moreover, there is no sign that, with winter approaching, the Clinton Administration is preparing any more creative or humane response to the destruction of Bosnia and its people.

The spastic rattling of a scabbarded sabre was not among the policy options offered in a carefully coördinated set of speeches and interviews given recently by several high Administration officials, including the President, in an effort to define a new American role in world affairs. "From Containment to Enlargement" was the title of the speech by Anthony Lake, Mr. Clinton's national-security adviser, to whom the task of limning an overarching strategic vision for the post-Soviet era apparently fell. The United States, Mr. Lake said, should now seek the "enlargement of the world's free community of market democracies." He did not explain how this doctrine might be made to square with American policy toward Bosnia—where, before sinking into its current paralysis, the United States lent its support to a partition plan, ultimately rejected by the Bosnian government, that provided for the dismemberment by tribal warlords of an internationally recognized democratic state. Indeed, he explicitly separated the Bosnian case from "our broader strategy in the world."

Mr. Clinton himself was not always so fastidiously self-serving in his foreign-

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policy views as he has lately appeared to be. Last year, as a candidate, he condemned the Bush Administration's failure to oppose Serbian aggression, and vowed to "try to restore the basic conditions of humanity" in Bosnia if he became President. On the general question of how to assert American interests abroad, he presented himself as a forward-looking multilateralist, an enthusiastic supporter of the United Nations as the main guarantor of peace and international security. He even endorsed a proposal put forth by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to create a U.N. standing army.

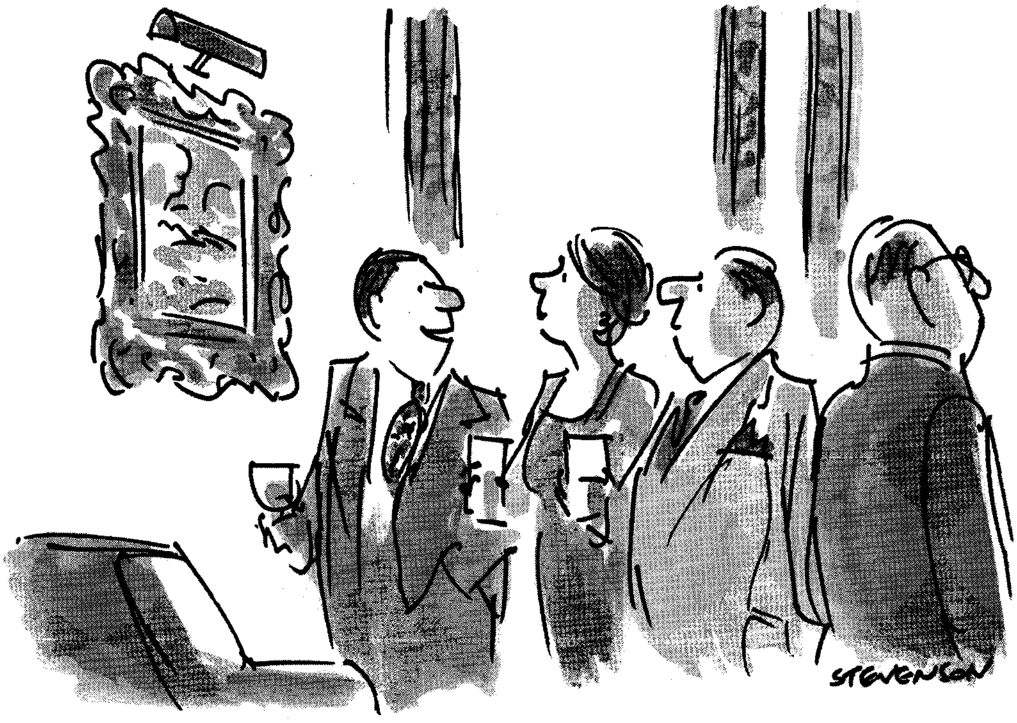
The true story of the Clinton Administration's foreign policy to date—as opposed to the wishful official versions being offered by its spokespeople—is a harrowing tale of forced retreat from the moral high ground on these positions and others. After months of public anguishing, sweet nothing was done to stop the war in Bosnia. In his address to the U.N. in late September, President Clinton, while pledging to pay our outstanding U.N. bills, laid out new conditions for United States involvement in U.N. peacekeeping missions. The American role in peacekeeping now looks more likely to shrink than to grow. The notion of a standing U.N. force has vanished over the horizon, and even the idea of United States combat troops serving under a non-American commander, which Mr. Clinton had approved until recently, has become politically untouchable. Then, last month, when the disastrous raid by United States Army Rangers in southern Mogadishu was closely followed by the humiliating failure to land logistical troops in Haiti, Mr. Clinton found himself badly weakened, with Congress lunging for the reins of foreign policy (obliging him to set a politically necessary but morally and strategically indefensible deadline for pulling all American forces out of Somalia) and the prospects for even his beloved trade and domestic legislation—health-care reform and the North American Free Trade Agreement—suddenly darkened.

The strategic and political forces confronting Mr. Clinton are quite different from any that were faced by his predecessors. There is still a male chorus calling for the handling of most, if not all, international conflicts by the use of military force—or, at least, by a display of hairy-chested "resolve"—and yet even this old cry doesn't always arise from the same precincts as before. Many of yesterday's anti-imperialists are ardent interventionists today, and some of the new champions of consultations with Congress were, under Republican Administrations, among the staunchest defenders of executive prerogative. More significant, perhaps, than these debates among fellow-internationalists is a growing wariness, especially among conservatives, of all forms of foreign entanglement.

The United Nations is traditionally a target of such sentiments, and a strong tide of anti-U.N. feeling has indeed been rising around the country, particularly since the botched raid in Mogadishu. To be sure, the U.N. *has* made a mess of things. In Somalia, a country riddled with dozens of factions, the U.N. may be more unpopular than any of them. In Bosnia, the international peacekeepers have frequently become, in a sort of mass outbreak of the Stockholm syndrome, de-facto allies of the Serbian forces who in effect hold them hostage. Both of these fiascoes, obviously, hold lessons for future peacekeeping operations.

But Mr. Lake, in sketching his grand scheme for "enlargement" of market democracies, understates the significance of the challenges posed by Bosnia and Somalia. Conflicts in such places may not involve vital American interests in the immediate way that the conflicts in Russia and the Middle East do, but they are far from anomalous. In fact, they are just the sort of tangled, bloody problems that the world, stripped of its Cold War restraints, is likely to be dealing with for many years.

But the Bosnian catastrophe, whether or not it fits into our latest global-policy scheme, must be addressed immediately. To blame the French and the British for his own inaction, as President Clinton continues to do, is childish. To keep passing toothless Security Council resolutions condemning Serbian aggression is, ultimately, obscene. To sigh that the American public's enthusiasm for international peacekeeping, never great, has been wiped out by the casualties in Somalia scants the possibility of leadership, the very ingredient of American policymaking extolled by the Administration's heralds and theorists. For at least eighteen months—during two Administrations—United States policy toward Bosnia has been willfully obtuse, conducted from a cowardly slouch. On taking office, Bill Clinton quite deliberately set the standards for the humanitarian use of American power in his Administration higher than they were in the Bush Administration. He should begin to meet those standards with something besides fine words. ♦



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Justice Clarence Thomas is a friend of mine; we worked together at an "entry-level" job in the Missouri Attorney General's office. As a friend of Clarence's, I find Jeffrey Toobin's description of him in "The Burden of Clarence Thomas" (September 27th) as a brooding Hamlet, alone in his fortress plotting his revenge, laughable. Unfortunately, this kind of characterization may play well with the masses, who have not had the privilege of knowing him—a result Mr. Toobin surely intends.

In nominating Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, President Bush got exactly what he sought, a person of conservative values who could withstand the grueling confirmation process. Justice Thomas's written opinions during his short tenure demonstrate the philosophy of a justice determined to apply the Constitution in the manner intended by its framers.

While chronicling some of the humiliations, large and small, that Justice Thomas continues to endure, Mr. Toobin dares to muse about his seeming lack of magnanimity after his victory. How generous is one supposed to be when one's contributions are constantly denigrated by the liberal élite because they do not conform to some preconceived standards? Justice Thomas's ability to contribute to the continuing debate over the role of government in our lives and the role of the individual in society has been unfairly compromised by the Anita Hill charges, charges which were not proved and which I believe are not true. Instead of wondering about Justice Thomas's seeming lack of magnanimity, we might better ask why his enemies do not accept their defeat with dignity, and debate his views on their merits without resorting to name-calling and personal attacks.

RICHARD L. WIELER
Columbia, Mo.

Jeffrey Toobin's piece on Clarence Thomas proved an unfortunate experience for me. *The New Yorker* has disappointed me by paying serious attention to a man who clearly opposes protecting the civil rights of gay Americans. It is ironic that Thomas should be quoted as having objected to the "new intolerance" and proscriptions against nonconformity. As a very angry gay man, I will stubbornly conform to Nature's design, and no less stubbornly voice my alarm at the tenure of a proud bigot on what ought to be the fairest and least hate-ridden court of our land. I only hope that Justice Thomas is familiar enough with the United States Constitution to know that no law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or abridging the freedom of speech—or, indeed, intruding upon the privacy of the People.

TONY FARADJIAN
Berkeley, Calif.

Jeffrey Toobin's "The Burden of Clarence Thomas" asserts that Justice Thomas selected Mercer law school to break his public silence only because Mercer is "a small and decidedly conservative institution" in "the sleepy city of Macon."

I doubt whether Mr. Toobin's thesis can explain why other Supreme Court Justices, including Warren Burger, William Rehnquist, William Brennan, and Anthony Kennedy, have also chosen to speak at Mercer law school. Could it be that there are some genuinely appealing attributes to this fine, old, purposefully small regional law school that make it—"far from a major American law school"—nonetheless an attractive venue

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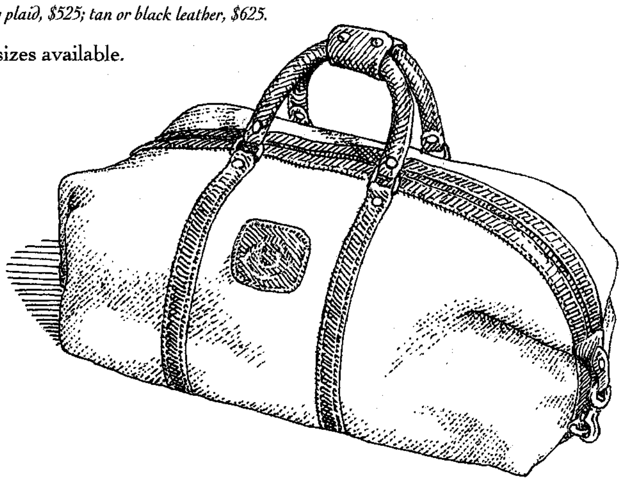

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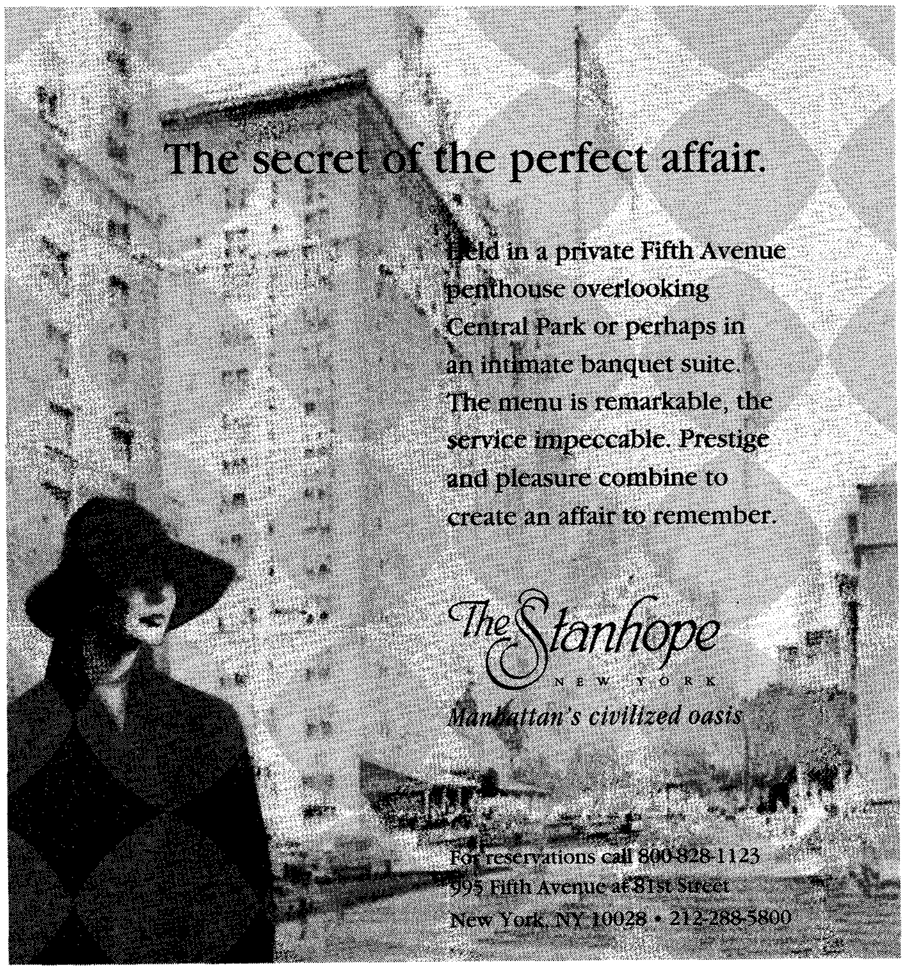

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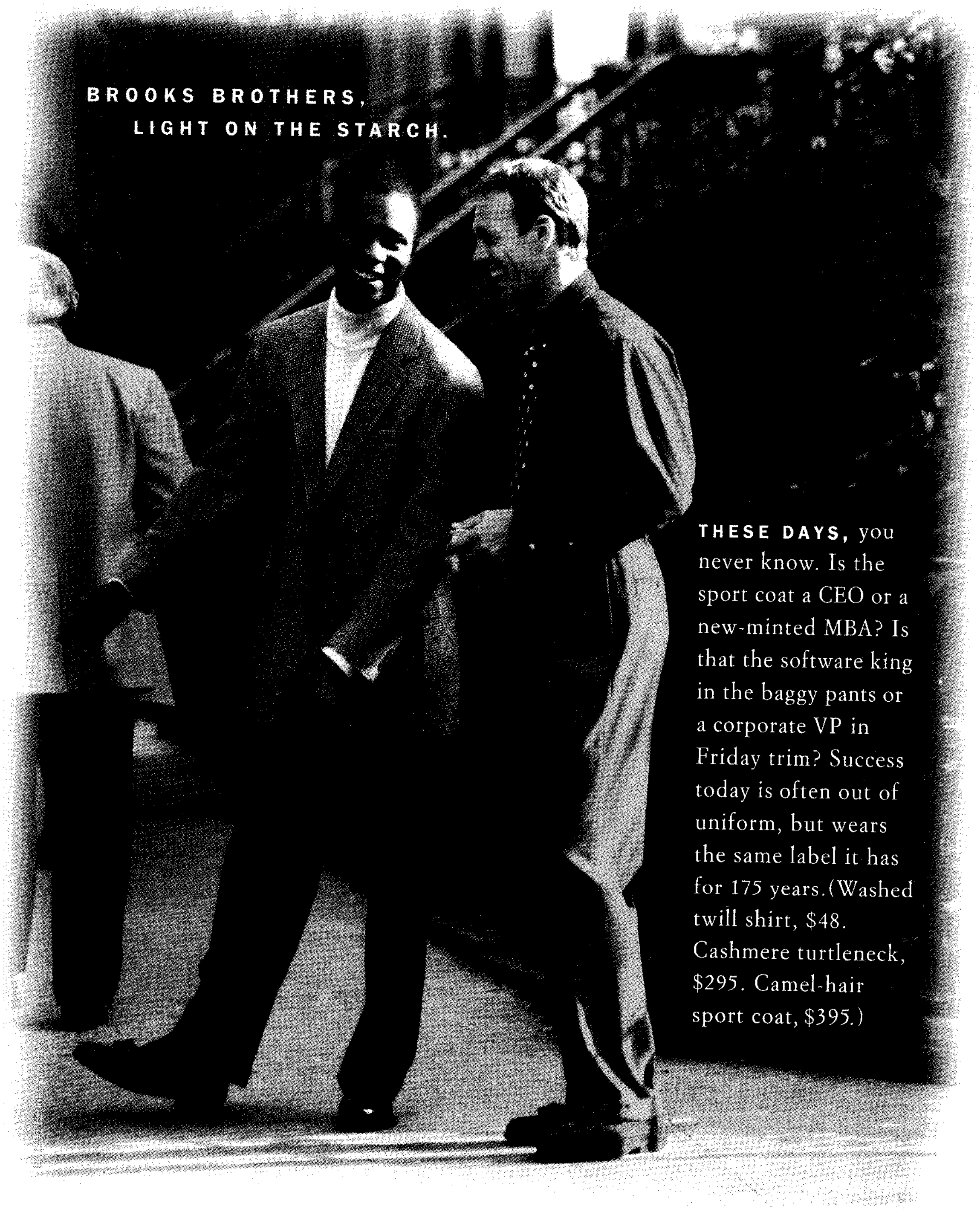
FRED C. SHAPIRO

FRED C. SHAPIRO, who died on October 22nd, at the age of sixty-two, came to *The New Yorker* from the old *Herald Tribune* twenty-nine years ago. Newspapers and fast-breaking stories were Fred's first professional love, and though he wrote tens of thousands of words and dozens of pieces for this magazine, a part of him remained enthralled by daily journalism. Fred's first piece for *The New Yorker*—an account of rioting that had broken out in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn—ran on August 1, 1964, and Fred joined our staff shortly afterward. His first major work was a three-part series about George Whitmore—a young black drifter who was wrongly accused in the 1963 murder of Janice Wylie and Emily Hoffert—for which Fred won the Robert F. Kennedy award for distinguished journalism.

In 1987, Fred was offered an editing job at Xinhua, the New China News Agency, in Beijing, and he took it. But he remained a reporter, and soon he was sending along his impressions of life in China and Hong Kong—in all, eleven pieces over the next few years. In the spring of 1989, when thousands of students and workers began staging protests in Tiananmen Square, and when Chinese troops moved in to crush the rebellion, Fred wrote vivid, on-the-spot reports of the events, and his coverage won an award from the Overseas Press Club.

At the end of last year, Fred came by the office, looking trim and fit. He had just signed on for another tour of duty at Xinhua. When Fred arrived at the magazine, back in the sixties, he said that one of his dreams was that he might someday be one of its Asian correspondents. In his final years, he fulfilled that dream admirably. ♦



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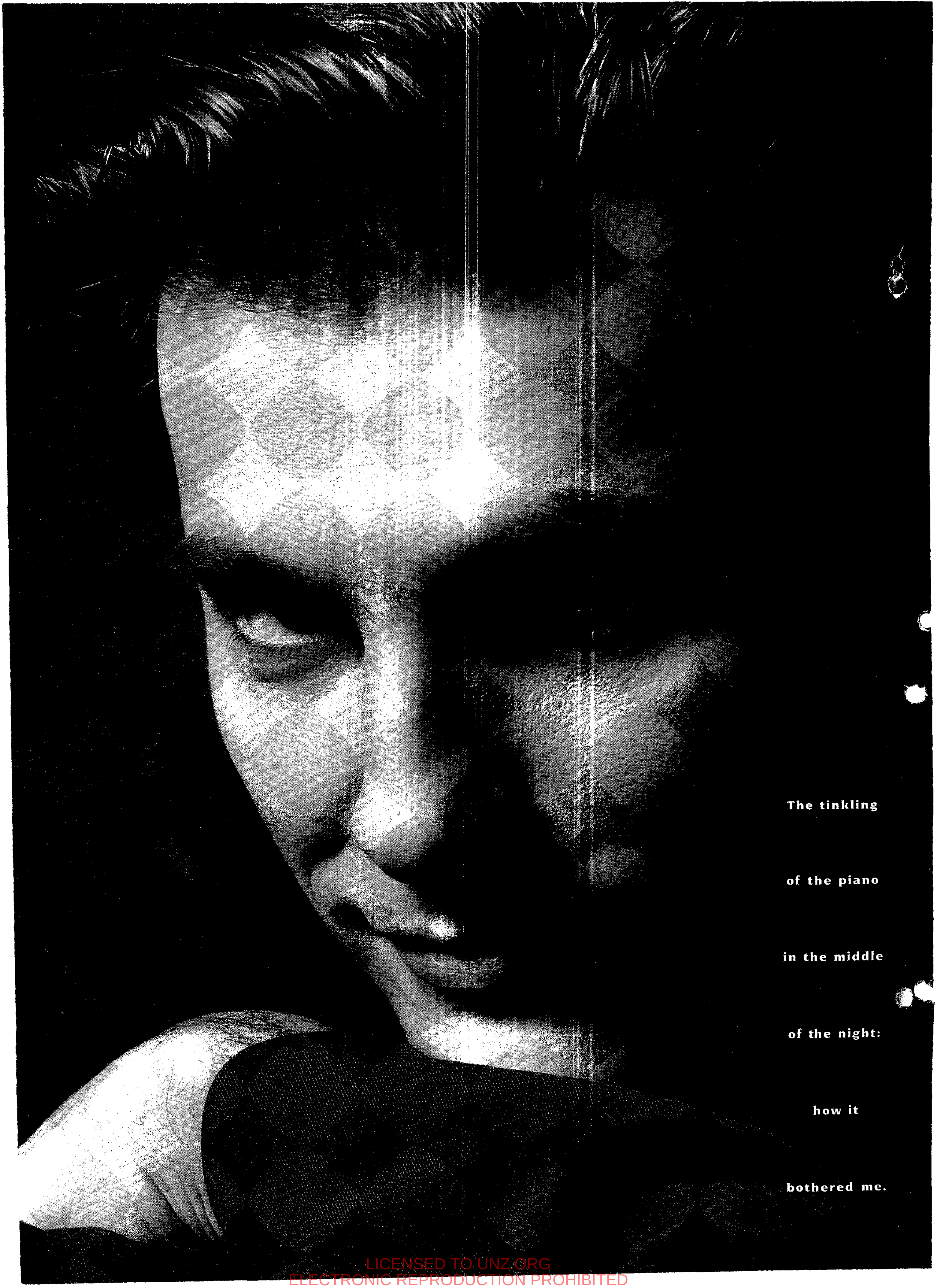


The tinkling

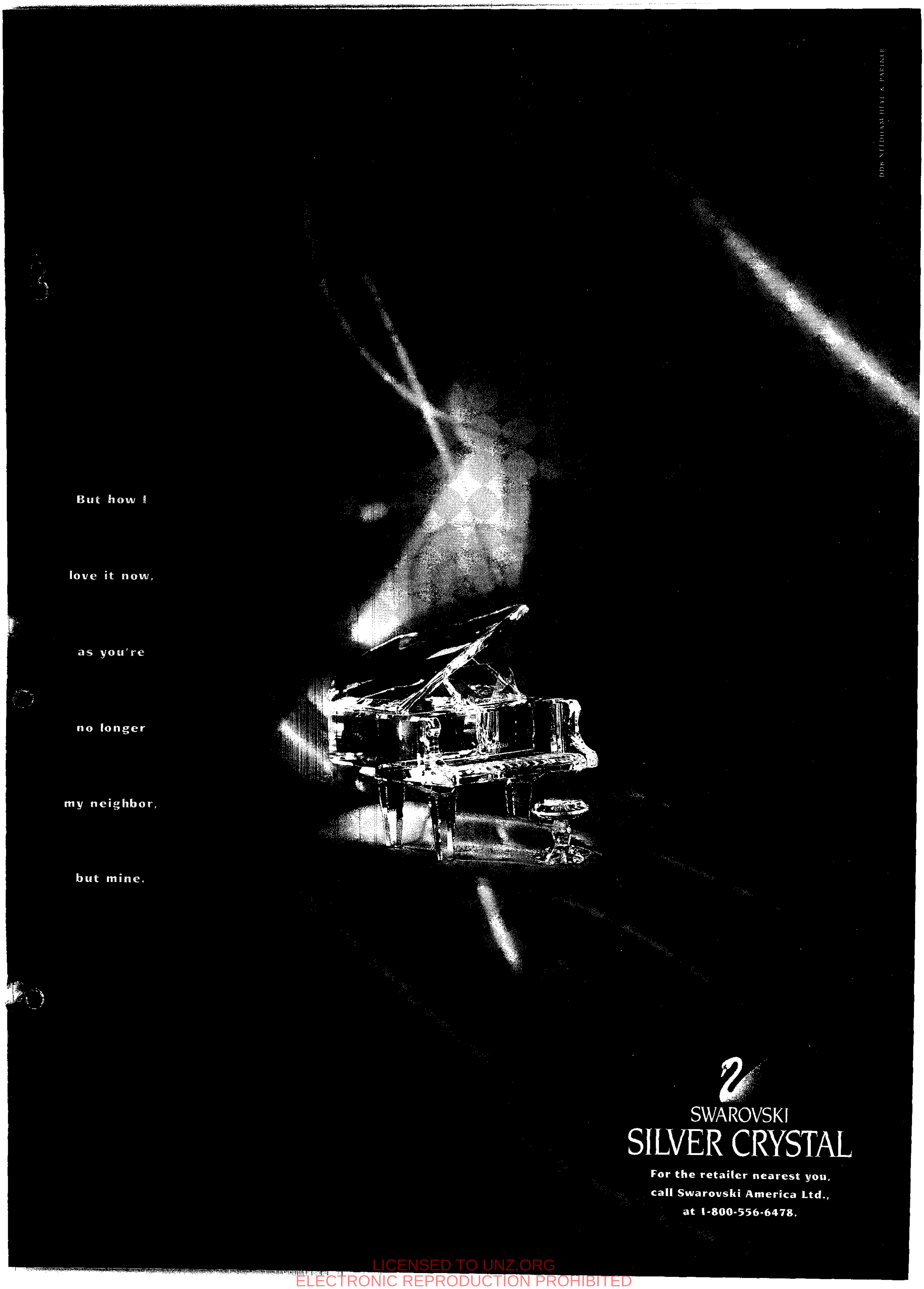
of the piano

in the middle

of the night:

how it

bothered me.



But how I
love it now,
as you're
no longer
my neighbor,
but mine.

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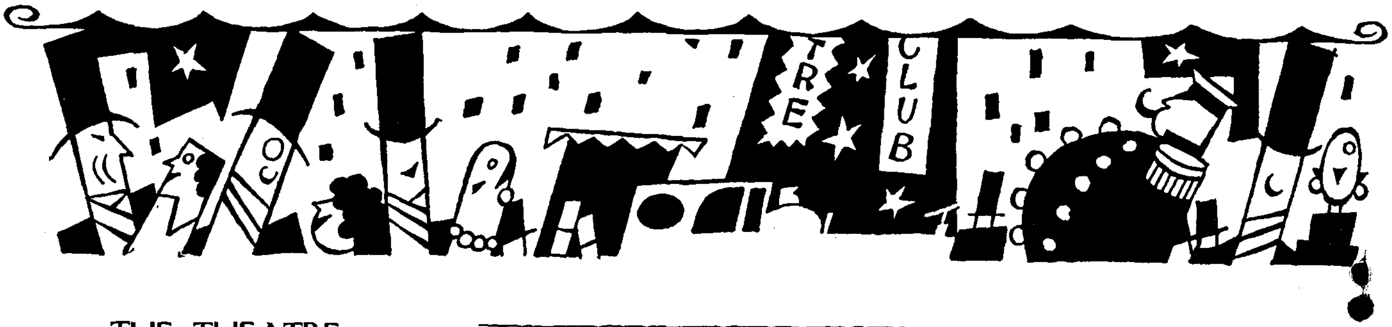

THE THEATRE

Serial Actor

The rock singer Danny Romalotti may be making his Broadway début as the lead in the revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," but he's already a trouper. He has never been sold into slavery by his brothers, like the Old Testament superstar of Lloyd Webber's musical, but in recent years he has been framed for cocaine possession, and he discovered that his long-lost father was a homeless derelict, and his wife, Cricket, an attorney, was sexually harassed and then nearly raped and murdered by her boss after getting him fired.

None of the above is true, except in the plot of the daytime soap opera "The Young and the Restless," in which Danny Romalotti has been played since 1981 by Michael Damian, who really will star in "Joseph" on Broadway. Last year, after the thirty-one-year-old actor was cast in the role, the producers of the soap opera decided to create a tie-in with the musical, and while Damian rehearsed and then performed in the Los Angeles production of "Joseph," his character—the kind, sensitive straight-arrow Danny—was Broadway bound as well. (Although Damian has no musical stage experience, he has pursued a career as a pop-music singer and recording artist, just like Danny.) Anyway, Cricket was going to move to New York with Danny, but now that her legal career has finally taken off (and Damian is on leave from the show) she is staying behind. Will Danny and Cricket's marriage survive? Will living in New York change Danny? Will New York theatre critics eat Michael Damian alive? Stay tuned.

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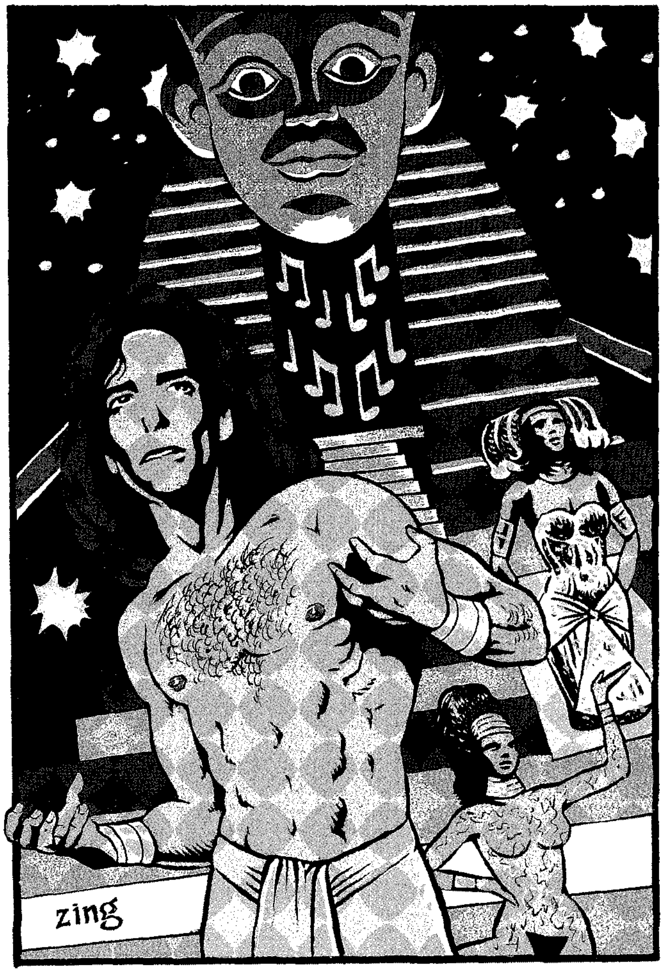


Michael Damian in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."

MARK ZINGARELLI

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Abe Lincoln in Illinois—Sam Waterston has the title role in a production of Robert E. Sherwood's 1938 play. Previews begin Nov. 4. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Angels in America: Perestroika—The second half of Tony Kushner's epic work is in previews, running in repertory with Part One, "Millennium Approaches." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Any Given Day—A new play by Frank D. Gilroy, which stars Sada Thompson and Andrea Marcovicci. In previews. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Cyrano: The Musical—The Dutch actor Bill van Dijk has the title role in this new musical version of Edmond Rostand's play. In previews. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief— Paula Vogel's play looks at "Othello" from the female characters' points of view. In previews. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Eating Chicken Feet—A comedy by Kitty Chen, presented by Pan Asian Rep and the Women's Project. Opens Nov. 3 at 8. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660.)

Forbidden Broadway 1994—A new edition of Gerard Alessandrini's parodies, including spoofs of "Angels in America" and "The Who's Tommy." In previews. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

A Grand Night for Singing!—An expanded version of the Rodgers and Hammerstein revue that played at Rainbow & Stars last spring. In previews. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

How to Write a Play—An autobiographical comedy from 1983 by the late Charles Ludlam, directed by and starring Everett Quinton. Previews through Nov. 7. Opens Nov. 8 at 8. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—Michael Damian leads a seventy-member company in a new production of the musical by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber. In previews. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

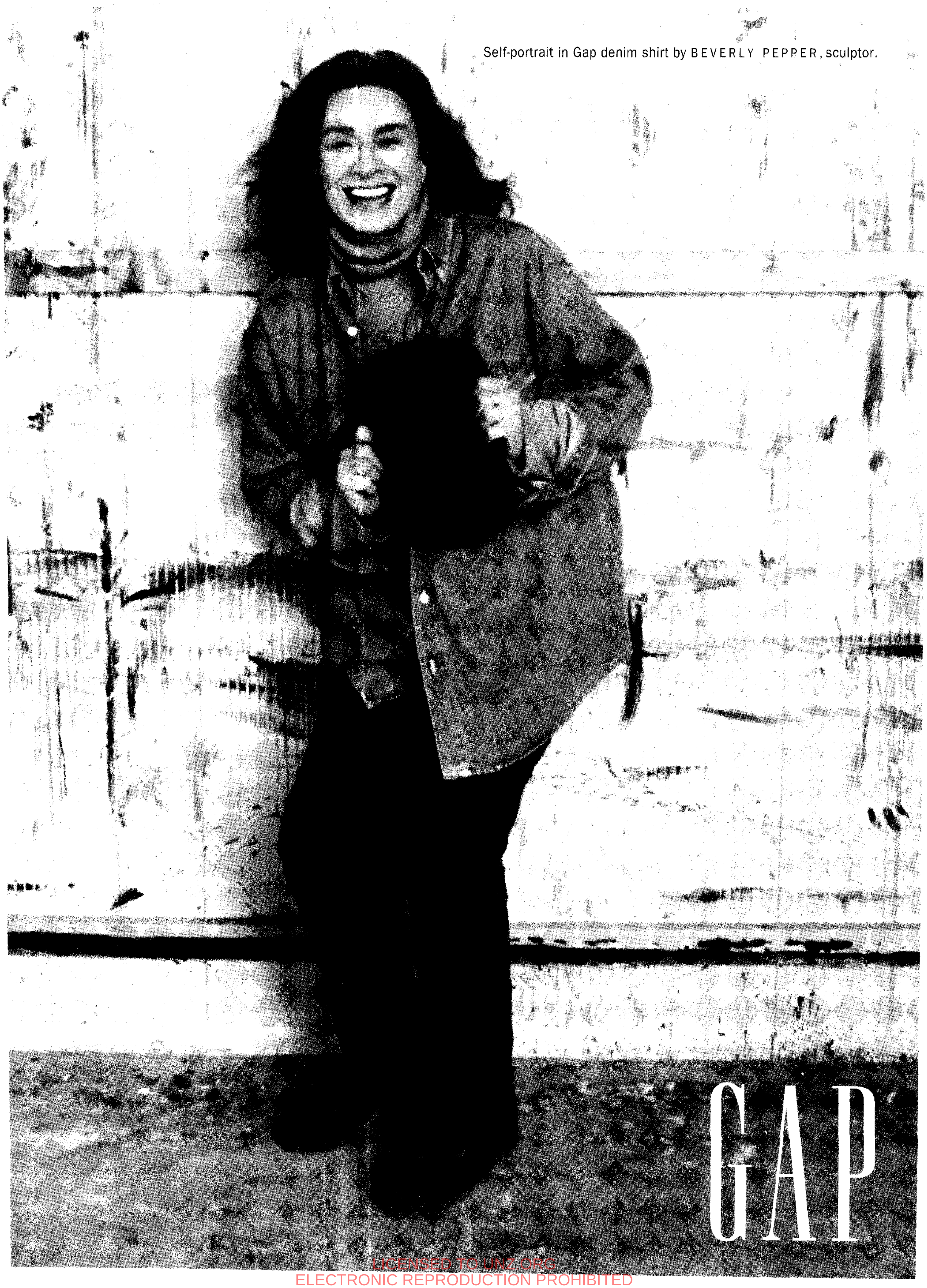
The Kentucky Cycle—Robert Schenkkan's six-hour, two-part play, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992, comes to Broadway. Stacy Keach heads the cast. In previews. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

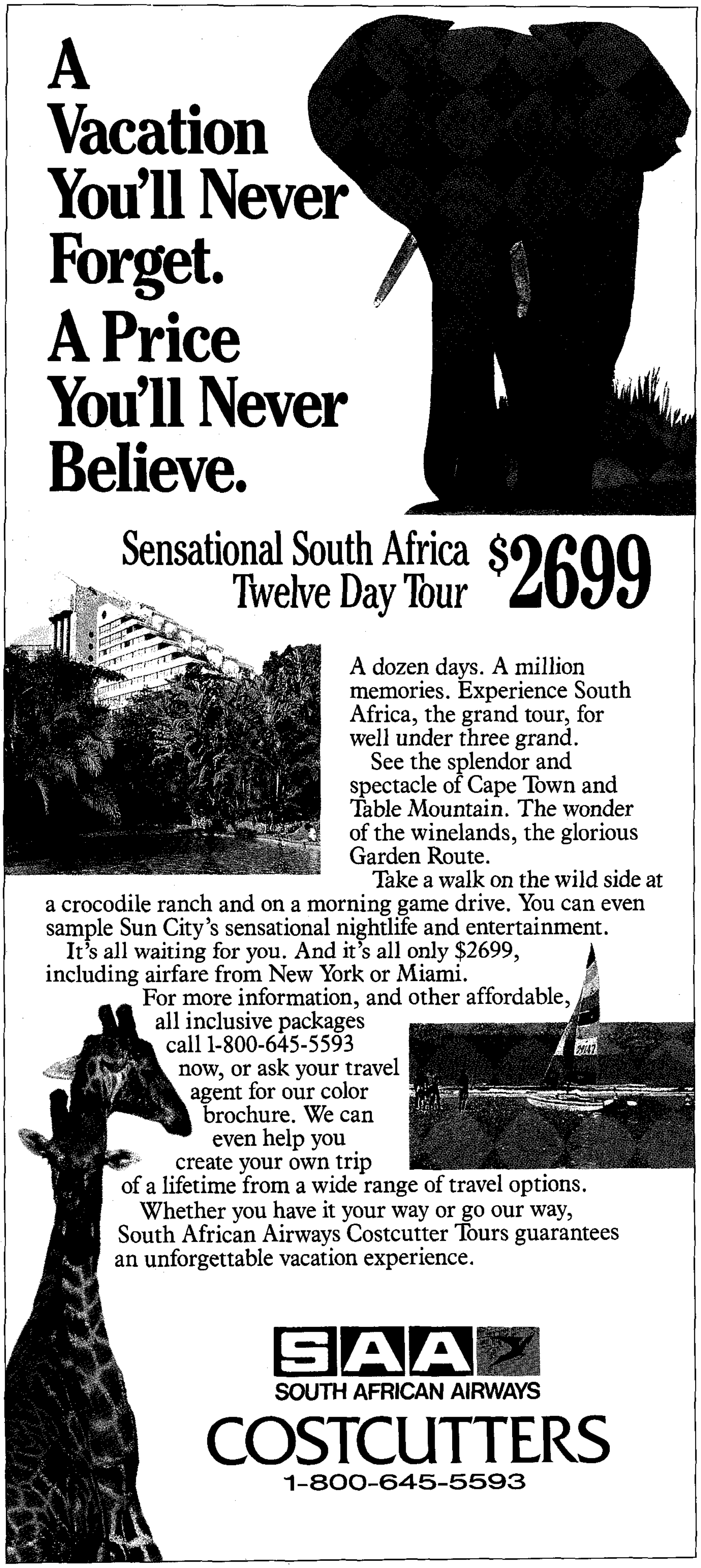
Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's latest comedy takes place during the early days of live TV. Starring Nathan Lane, Randy Graff, and Mark Linn-Baker. In previews. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

The Lights—The Atlantic Theatre Company in a new play by Howard Korder. Mark Wing-Davey directed. Opens Nov. 3 at 6:45. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Loman Family Picnic—A play by Donald Margulies about a Jewish family in Brooklyn during the sixties. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

A Quarrel of Sparrows—A comedy by James Duff. Previews through Nov. 8. Opens Nov.


Self-portrait in Gap denim shirt by BEVERLY PEPPER, sculptor.
GAP



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9 at 8. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

The Red Shoes—A new musical, based on the 1948 movie, with a score by Jule Styne, a book by Marsha Norman, and lyrics by Ms. Norman and Paul Stryker. With Roger Rees and Margaret Illmann. In previews. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Signature Theatre Company—Presenting Edward Albee's one-act plays "Counting the Ways" and "Listening." The double bill opens Nov. 5 at 8 and runs through Dec. 5. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200.)

Timon of Athens—The National Actors Theatre launches its season with a rarely performed Shakespearean tragedy. This production, set in the Jazz Age, stars Brian Bedford and features a score by Duke Ellington. Two previews on Nov. 3. Opens Nov. 4 at 7 and runs through Dec. 5. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

Who Will Carry the Word?—Charlotte Delbo's Holocaust memoir, translated from the French by Cynthia Haft. Previews Nov. 5-7. Opens Nov. 8 at 7 and runs through Nov. 28. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 886-1889.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Angels in America: Millennium Approaches—The first half of Tony Kushner's epic work is set in 1985, at the height of the Reagan counter-revolution, and it maps the trickle-down effect of self-interest as Kushner's characters ruthlessly pursue their private and public destinies. The play is a saga about sexual politics, death, and decency. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Annie Warbucks—Kathryn Zaremba, an infant phenomenon if ever there was one, has the title role in this beguiling sequel to "Annie." After sixteen years, the old team—Thomas Meehan (book) and Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin (music and lyrics)—is still in top form. (8/23 & 30/93) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Blood Brothers—Willy Russell's musical, imported from Britain, about twin boys who are separated at birth. The boys later become friends, love the same girl, and die violent deaths. The cast includes Shaun and David Cassidy and Petula Clark. (5/10/93) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Blown Sideways Through Life—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" in a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

Family Secrets—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

The Fiery Furnace—Julie Harris stars in a play by Timothy Mason. Presented by Circle Repertory Company. (10/18/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Four Dogs and a Bone—A new play written and directed by John Patrick Shanley. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Howard Crabtree's Whoop-Dee-Doo!—A witty and topical musical revue. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. For information about tickets, call 777-7474.)

How the Other Half Loves—The York Theatre Company presents a 1970 farce by the English playwright Alan Ayckbourn. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 534-5366.)

In Persons—The actors Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson in a show about their lives in the theatre. Martin Charnin was the director. (10/18/93) (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Jeffrey—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay

Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

Jewish Repertory Theatre—The company opens its season with a musical called "The Cincinnati Saint." (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Jimmy Tingle's Uncommon Sense—The American Humorists Series continues with this solo show. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Johnny Pye and the Foolkiller—Kaitlin Hopkins, Daniel Jenkins, and Spiro Malas lead the cast of a musical by Mark St. Germain and Randy Courts, based on a short story by Stephen Vincent Benét. (Lamb's Little Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. Carol Lawrence steps in for Ms. Rivera Nov. 8-13. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Later Life—The reunion, after thirty years, of a middle-aged man and woman who were once in love is at the heart of this play by A. R. Gurney. Mr. Gurney has written with his customary wit and perception, and the actors do him proud. (6/14/93) (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Mixed Emotions—Katherine Helmond and Harold Gould portray a widow and a widower in a romantic comedy by Richard Baer. (11/1/93) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Pterodactyls—Nicky Silver's absurdist comedy about an AIDS-related homecoming is intermittently amusing until its final scene, in which heavy-handed pathos almost sinks the proceedings. That the production generally succeeds is owing in large measure to the performances of Kelly Bishop as a Main Line matron and T. Scott Cunningham as her son. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Nov. 28.)

Shakespeare for My Father—A marvellous one-woman show, in which Lynn Redgrave reviews her own life in a search for her unloving father, Michael Redgrave. She combines anecdotes, brilliant thumbnail impersonations of British actors, and wry reminiscence with passages from Shakespeare. (5/10/93) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Showing at Delphi—Six stereotypical New Yorkers take their problems upstate over Christmas. Although the playwright, Catherine Butterfield, seems unable to resist the easy joke or the obvious plot twist, the evening is still fun, and the performances of three of the actors—Arabella Field, Sam Tsoutsouvas, and John Christopher Jones—give it deeper interest. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes Nov. 7.)

Sophistry—A play by Jonathan Marc Sherman. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Nov. 7.)

The Treatment—Randy Danson and Daniel Von Bargen in a play by Martin Crimp, which premièred in London last April. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

The Twilight of the Golds—A play by Jonathan Tolins, starring Jennifer Grey, David Groh, Raphael Sbarge, Judith Scarpone, and Michael Spound. Arvin Brown directed. (11/1/93) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Philip Gardner and Jodie Gates in the Joffrey's "Billboards."

MARK GAGNON

The Who's Tommy—Pete Townshend's music—however muted for Broadway—has an indubitable thrill. This adaptation was directed by Des McAnuff. (5/3/93) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Workroom—A play by Jean-Claude Gromberg, set in France during the Second World War. Translated from the French by Tom Kempinski. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **OLEANNA:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY

Big Apple Circus—The little big top returns to Lincoln Center. (Damrosch Park. Through Jan. 9. For information about show times and tickets, call 268-0055.)

Frank Maya: Paying for the Pool—The comedian's latest show. (Atlantic Theatre, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Nov. 4 and Nov. 7 at 8 and Nov. 5-6 at 9. Through Nov. 14.)

Wake Up, I'm Fat!—A one-woman show by Camryn Manheim about "living large in America," in a new performance space. (Here, 145 Sixth Ave., at Spring St. 647-0202. Nov. 4-6 at 8 and Nov. 7 at 6. Through Nov. 21.)

DANCE

Joffrey Ballet—New Yorkers will have a chance to decide if ballet and Prince go together, at the New York première of "Billboards," in the Next Wave Festival. The four ballets—by Laura Dean, Charles Moulton, Margo Sappington, and Peter Pucci—use thirteen songs from the Minneapolis pop star's catalogue. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Nov. 9 at 8. Through Nov. 14. . . . **NOTE:** The company will also perform at the Tilles Center, Long Island University, in Brookville, on Nov. 5-6 at 8, in "Light Rain," "Monotones II," "The Garden of Villandry," and "Italian Suite." For tickets, call 1-516 626-3100.)

Paul Taylor Dance Company—Final performances of the engagement. Nov. 3 and Nov. 5 at 8 and Nov. 7 at 3: "Mercuric Tidings," "Spindrift," and "Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rehearsal)." . . ¶ Nov. 4 and Nov. 6 at 8: "Arden Court," "Snow White," "A Field

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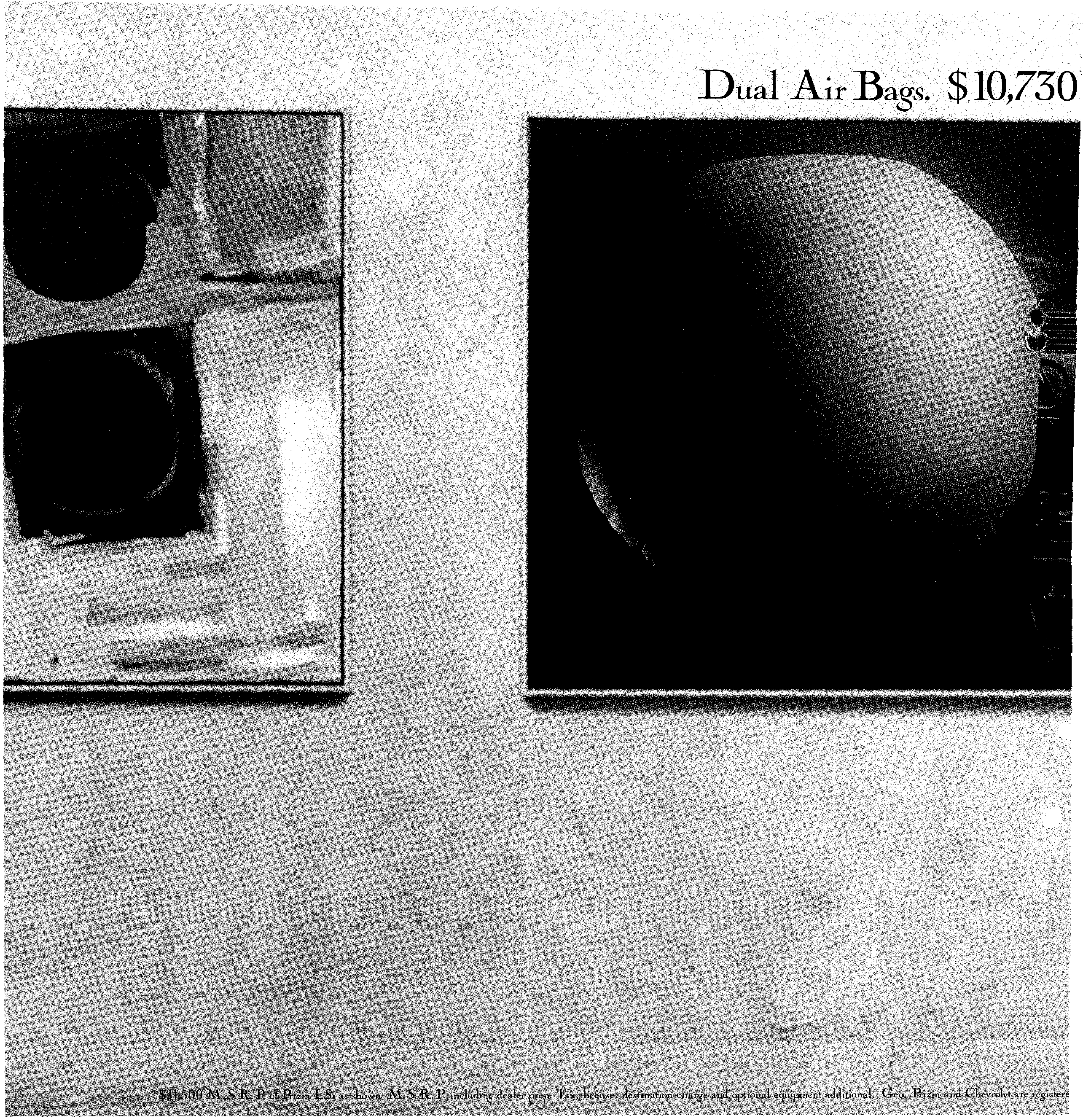

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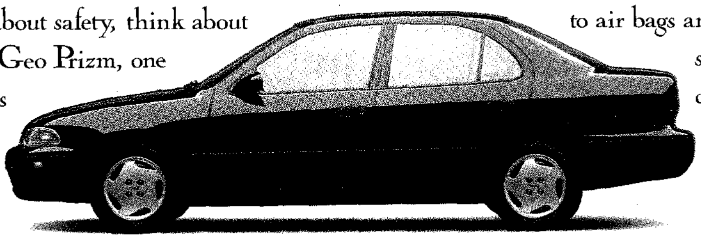

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Steel Safety Cage • Call 1-800-GET-2-KNO of Grass," and "Esplanade."... ¶ Nov. 6 at 2: "Images," "Last Look," and "Company B."... ¶ Nov. 7 at 7:30: "Images," "Company B," and "Icarus at Night." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Trisler Danscompany—In "Dancing Through Time," a program spanning seventy-three years of dance, with guest artists Carmen de Lavallade, John Jones, and others. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 3-5 at 8; Nov. 6 at 2 and 8; and Nov. 7 at 2 and 7:30.)

Fred Darsow Dance Company—A nine-member company, accompanied by two singers and a guitarist from Spain, in "Cernícalo," "Valiente," "Fiesta por Tangos," "Fiesta por Bulerías," and "Soléa por Bulerías." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Nov. 4-6 at 8 and Nov. 7 at 3.)

The Salon Project—Works by four choreographers. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. Nov. 4-5 at 8:30. Tickets at the door on the evenings of the performances.)

Keiko Fujii Dance Company—An Osaka-based contemporary-dance company, presenting "Kanon II." (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 4 at 8.)

Janis Brenner & Dancers—In "Ton of Led," "Plateau #2," and an unnamed solo work. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 7 at 3.)

"On the Waterfront"—A site-specific piece by Martha Bowers, with a cast including Hank Smith, Wiggles (of Rock Steady Crew), and members of Ms. Bowers' company; music composed and performed by David Pleasant, with a sound installation by John Gromada. Presented by Dancing in the Streets. (Beard Street Pier, Red Hook, Brooklyn. Nov. 6-7 at 2. No tickets necessary; for directions, call 989-6830.)

ISOBOBS—The opening performance of a one-week engagement by a collaborative ensemble of dancers (ISO Dance) and a-cappella singers (the Bobs): the New York première of "29.95: A Mall Odyssey," and other works. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 9 at 8. Through Nov. 14.)

NIGHT LIFE

The Colossus

Every year or so, tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins releases a mysteriously disappointing new album and follows it with a New York concert of overwhelming beauty and bravado—in effect, greeting his own mild recordings with a living roar. At sixty-three, Rollins possesses the kind of mythic presence that the older Miles Davis traded on, except that Rollins still has the goods. His improvisations are torrents of brutish grace, roiling with melodic and rhythmic invention, and his tone puts all other saxophonists to shame.

Still, the studio spooks him. Rollins' albums of the last twenty years are plagued by blundering rhythm sections and wasteful solos by second-rate sidemen. "Old Flames," his recent release, is not much of an exception. Although Rollins sounds more carefree than usual, and pianist Tommy Flanagan is impeccable (he has recorded on and off with Rollins, since the great 1956 album "Saxophone Colossus"), the aftereffect is still a letdown. But if the studio inhibits Rollins, the concert stage—and competition, in the form of young virtuosos—liberates him. Previous encounters with Roy Hargrove and Branford and Wynton Marsalis left the aging gladiator bedecked with laurels. On November 4 at Carnegie Hall, Rollins, assisted by Flanagan, takes on Terence Blanchard, the young trumpeter, who also suffers from studio fright. Like the master, however, Blanchard shakes off his diffidence when he's up against real danger—and he will be.

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JOE DAVIS

CONCERTS

Robert Cray Band—This guitarist's latest album, "Shame + a Sin," is a more traditional blues affair than his recent albums, but it still seems that something is missing in Cray's crisp explorations of misery and loss—an emotional component. Just when you're ready to give up, however, he'll weigh in with a burning, twisting guitar solo that makes a believer out of you. With Albert Collins and the Icebreakers. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Nov. 5 at 8.)

Don Byron—The African-American jazz clarinettist and his group offer another opportunity to hear their remarkable and loving interpretation of Mickey Katz's soulful klezmer music. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Nov. 6 at 8.)

Mary Black—Mary Black has an Irish knack for finding narrative in even the simplest refrains. She sings each word with a connectedness that brings out the passion in the unabashed love song "Summer Sent You" and the poignancy of "The Holy Ground," a traditional song about going off to war. On recordings, her soprano is sometimes dampened by a studio sheen, especially on the softer, more New Age numbers. Live, this shouldn't be a problem. Town Hall is intimate enough to capture her subtlety and large enough to hold her rawer, more explosive edge. With Dougie MacLean, who's from Scotland. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Nov. 7 at 8.)

Big Jack Johnson—The Clarksdale, Mississippi, blues musician performs in a benefit for the Delta Blues Education Fund. Acoustic guitarist Corey Harris will also play. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway. Nov. 4 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 1-718 392-3263.)

Sonny Rollins—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 4 at 8.

"Highlights in Jazz"—Cab Calloway and the Manhattan School of Music Ensemble. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Nov. 4 at 8.)

Craig Handy—Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Nov. 5 at 8.

Jodi Watley—USA, 218 W. 47th St. 869-6103. Nov. 5 at 9.

Spyro Gyra—With Angela Bofill. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Nov. 6 at 8.)

Persian Traditional Music Ensemble—Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Nov. 6 at 8.

Guy Klucevsek—Roulette, 228 West Broadway. 219-8242. Nov. 6 at 9.

Jackson Browne—Nederlander Theatre, 208 W. 41st St. 307-4100. Nov. 9-10 and Nov. 12 at 8.

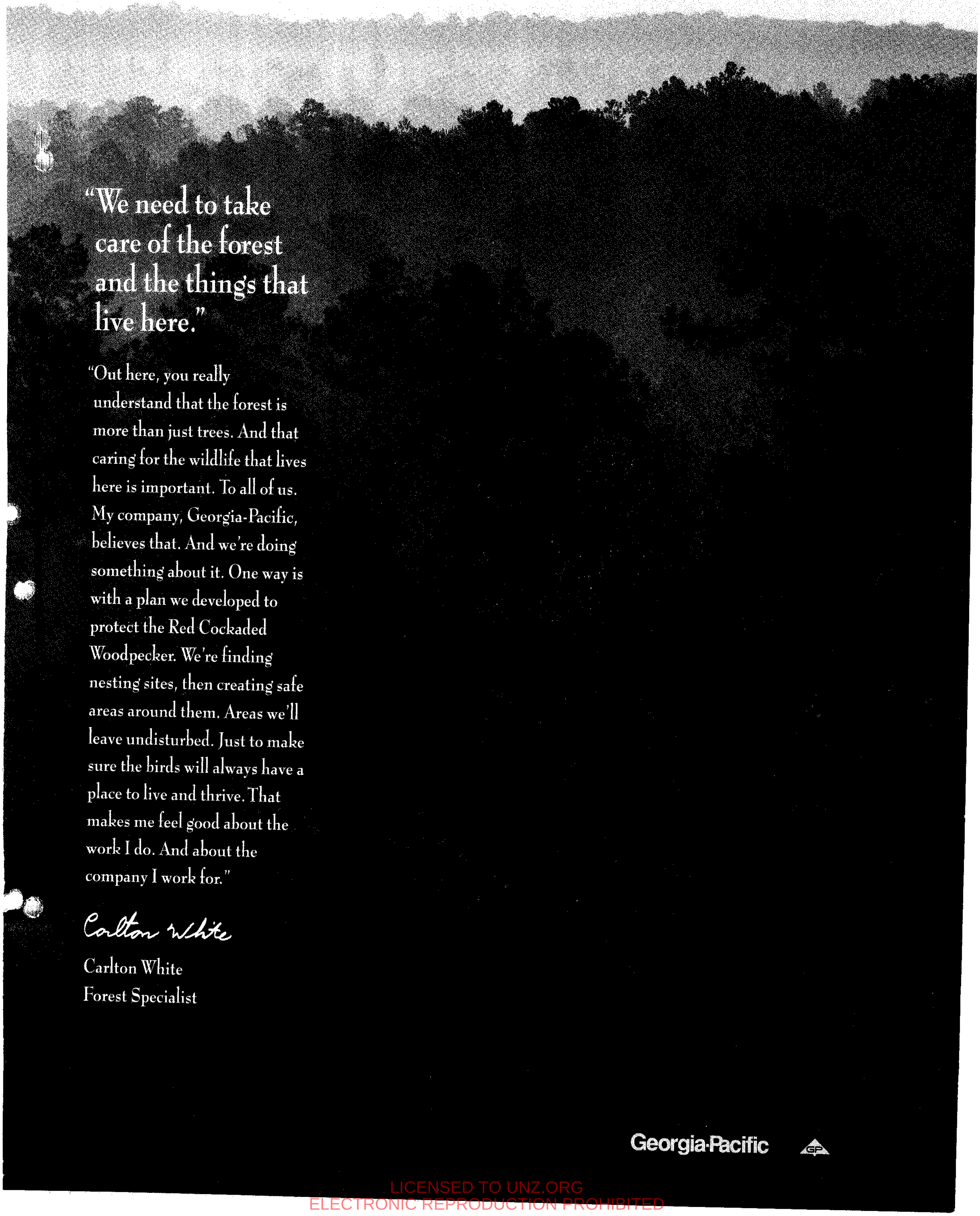
ROCK AND FOLK

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St.—In the heart of the theatre district, a haven for those whose musical tastes run left of "Tommy." On Nov. 4: **concrete blonde.** Led by Johnnette Napolitano, a no-nonsense siren with a hot, gritty voice, this L.A.-based trio has been making darkly compelling guitar pop for over a decade. Its new album, "Mexican Moon," is full of delicately haunting touches. For concert information, call 249-8870.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A great black loft that's jammed with row after row of tables—it looks a little like the site of a standardized test. On Nov. 3: sisters **kate and anna mc garrigle,** whose glowing harmonies have enchanted folk-music fans for years. Newcomer **eleanor mc evoy,** an Irish singer-songwriter with a penchant for elegant folk flourishes, arrives on Nov. 4.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A cross between an old-fashioned split-level night club and a parking garage decorated for a senior prom. Despite the balloons and the candy-colored lights, this is a serious room for serious rock-and-rolling. You can either vibrate up front, near a wall-o'-speakers, or lounge around the bar in the back and follow the show on a video monitor. On Nov. 5: two college-rock heavyweights, **tad** and **therapy?** While other Seattle-based bands—we won't mention any names—soberly regurgitate seventies-style traditions, from power rock to punk, the goofballs in Tad revel cheekily in all the self-important excesses of that curious decade. The result is noisy, bloated, and blissfully unpretentious. Straight outta Belfast, Therapy? infuses its lean, mean rock with funky samples. The trio's current EP, "Hats Off to the Insane," follows a blistering début album that wowed metal fans and hardcore types alike.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This two-floor establishment has been all



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Carlton White

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things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Physically, the place is sagging a bit, but it has an odd, dingy charm. On Nov. 5: the lyrical progressive pop of **MAZZY STAR**, with guests Codeine, St. Johnny, and Magnapop. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

LIMELIGHT, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—The **JIM ROSE CIRCUS SIDESHOW** appears on Nov. 9. Rose has described his freak show, which first turned heads (and stomachs) at last year's Lollapalooza festival, as "a human demolition derby, insanity's greatest hits." Sword-swallowing and body-piercing are among the tamer exhibitions in this oddly titillating hit parade, which is now available on video—no substitute, surely, for the real live flesh-and-blood-and-God-knows-what-else thing.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but lately a more apt name would be the Second Chance, since so many lost, forgotten, or faded rockers turn up here. The club's busy schedule includes a variety of newer acts, too. The **KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS** arrive on Nov. 4, with **JOHNNY JOHNSON** and **JIMMY HALL**. The Headhunters formed in the eighties, but it was their 1991 album, "Electric Barnyard," that put these roots rockers on the country-music map. The band serves up another helping of raucous but lyrical Southern boogie on its current release, "Rave On!" Any group that manages to produce sharp songs with titles like "The Ghost of Hank Williams" and "Redneck Girl" should be able to teach us Yankees a thing or two. **DAVE HOLE** will open. That always engaging apostle of self-esteem **JONATHAN RICHMAN** returns to the Roadhouse on Nov. 5-6. Dining.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. On Nov. 4: **TAD** and **THERAPY?** (See Grand listing.) On Nov. 6: fresh from their appearance at Irving Plaza, **MAZZY STAR,** with guests Codeine and St. Johnny.

RECORD STORE ARRIVALS

A highly selective list of new releases we're curious to hear.

TOM WAITS, "The Black Rider" (Island).

DOLLY PARTON/TAMMY WYNETTE/ LORETTA LYNN, "Honky Tonk Angels" (Columbia).

INXS, "Full Moon, Dirty Hearts" (Atlantic).

FRANK SINATRA, "Duets" (Capitol).

THE BAND, "Jericho" (Pyramid).

K.D. LANG, "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" (Sire).

CASSANDRA WILSON, "Blue Light 'Til Dawn" (Blue Note).

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER, "Sunset Blvd." (Polydor).

ROSELAND, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—The vast floor here can accommodate ballroom dancing, and does so on Thursdays and Sundays. On other nights, Roseland becomes another dark, sweaty rock club, with flannel-clad stage divers holding forth. **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE** and **QUICKSAND** are here on Nov. 4.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The pillared, loftlike room is decorated in a hodgepodge, vaguely Bourbon Street manner, and sight lines are above average. **KIRSTY MAC COLL** arrives on Nov. 9. Don't let MacColl's sunny voice and ebullient melodies fool you; she can brandish a sardonic lyric as forcefully as any other post-punk British minstrel. MacColl has recorded a couple of excellent solo albums, juxtaposing classic pop hooks with vocals that recently led one critic to call her "England's most undervalued cynic." Her new release, "Titanic Days," may be her best effort yet. The opening act is **DAVID GRAY,** a singer-songwriter whose early hero-worship managed to encompass both Bob Dylan and the Sex Pistols. Their influence is apparent on "A Century Ends," Gray's stark, stringently lean début album, which he'll no doubt showcase with all the fervor a young man and his acoustic guitar can summon.

WEBSTER HALL, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—With its recent bookings, this dance club is rapidly becoming a happening alternative-rock venue as well. **BJÖRK** will perform on Nov. [illegible] Her pixie-from-Hell soprano was the best thing about the Sugarcubes, an Icelandic pop band that took college rock by storm in the late eighties. Her new solo effort is called "Début"—a misleading title, given that Björk released her first album, a collection of children's songs, when she was twelve—and on it the singer replaces her old band's guitar-fuelled alternative-rock textures with elegant pastiches of jazz, funk, reggae, and even that hipper cousin of New Age known as ambient music. Whether she's cooing like a deranged coquette or sliding toward that inevitable, glorious growl, Björk's voice remains her most formidable asset. With **ULTRAMARINE.**

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—With psychedelic graffiti adorning the walls and peace-espousing, environmentally correct literature displayed near the door, it's little wonder that this cavernous dive (situated right down the block from the entrance to the Holland Tunnel) has lured Deadheads and bands that share the Dead's penchant for endless jamming. That said, patrons in suits and ties can also be spotted swigging beer at the bar and taking in the various incarnations of rock, R. & B., and jazz featured on the small stage toward the back of the club. On Nov. 4: the alternative pop

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bands MADDER ROSE and the NIGHTBLOOMS highlight a bill that also includes Monsterland and Midway Still.

STANDARDS AND CABARET

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—BONNIE FRANKLIN, best known for her role on the seventies TV sitcom "One Day at a Time," will wind up her engagement in the woody nook known as the Oak Room, on Nov. 6. Beginning Nov. 9: the California singer WESLIA WHITFIELD is back after her triumphant début here last spring; she is probably the most assured and affecting jazz-cabaret voice to arrive in New York in years. With Mike Greensill on piano. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, beginning Nov. 4, the pianist and singer BOBBY SHORT. Short happens to like the Carlyle, and his engagements here are always well worth checking out. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, BARBARA CARROLL presides at the piano.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. A revue about Eddie Lange, Bix Beiderbecke, and Bing Crosby is currently playing, with Frank Vignola, Peter Eckland, and Ernie Byrd. On Monday evenings, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA, a Dixieland-jazz ensemble now in its twentieth year. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, have to compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. The veteran singer and actress LESLIE UGGAMS continues her four-week engagement. Closed Mondays.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small red, gold, and green cabaret. JULIE WILSON continues her tuneful talk-style delivery of American song classics on Nov. 4-6, with pianist Mark Hummel. On Nov. 7, MARTI STEVENS will join pianist WILLIAM ROY, for a show titled "This 'n' That." Dining.

JAZZ AND BLUES

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. Salsa's royal couple CELIA CRUZ and TITO PUENTE continue (with Puente's orchestra) through Nov. 7. Soul diva CHAKA KHAN begins holding court on Nov. 9. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—On any given night, and well into the morning, one or another of New York's many formidable pianists can be found here, shoehorned into a corner with the resplendent Baldwin that Paul Desmond bequeathed to the late Bradley Cunningham. Pianist MULGREW MILLER, whose excellent new album is called "Hand in Hand," appears with bassist RICHIE GOODS and drummer TONY REEDUS through Nov. 6. Dining.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The seating arrangement in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement makes flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. A tribute to the late, great bandleader Art Blakey, featuring alumni of Blakey's Jazz Messengers, continues through Nov. 7. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor LES PAUL leads a trio. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, bangers and mash, and a piano. While music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. Pianist JUDY CARMICHAEL and guitarist CHRIS FLORY perform on Nov. 3-6.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drinks lend this blues bar a frat-house aura, but don't let that put you off: the long, dark, brick-walled room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor. The CHRIS CAINE band appears on Nov. 3. On Nov. 6: slide-guitar virtuoso DAVE HOLE.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Society jazz band; Tuesdays to Jim Lawyer and his Bluebird orchestra; Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band; Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and Sam Ulano and his Swingers, with singer Vinnie Knight; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Upstairs at this gilt and lamé club is the Blue Room, an intimate nook with Art Deco touches and chanteuse memorabilia. It's the perfect setting for a night out with JIMMY SCOTT, who's here Thursdays through Saturdays for the next three weeks. With good reason, Scott has dropped the "little" that used to front his name—there's nothing diminutive about his talent. His quirky moves, as he looks from one side of the room to the other, make you feel as if he were carrying on a discussion. He knows exactly what he's doing musically, too: even on songs you've heard dozens of times before, he makes you listen for the next lyric as if it were a password to love and happiness. Seize the opportunity to see the man who counts Nancy Wilson and Ray Charles among his admirers ("Jimmy had soul way back when people weren't using the word"). Downstairs, in the main room, on Nov. 4: JAMIROQUAI, a London-based outfit that deftly blends elements of soul, jazz, and club music with environmental correctness. Its major-label début is called "Emergency on Planet Earth" and includes the single "When You Gonna Learn," a funky little ditty warning us of imminent disaster.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Any club that serves as home base for both Nat Adderley and Steve Lacy is not likely to be pigeonholed. The ART FARMER quintet, with JEROME RICHARDSON, appears all this week (except Nov. 8). Flugelhornist Farmer proves that urbanity has its place, even in jazz's spontaneous and emotional universe. By picking the perfect notes, placing them exactly where they should be, and burnishing each one with a sheen of elegance, he has made a virtue out of control and calculation. Jerome Richardson, the exemplary and rarely seen saxophonist and flutist, is Farmer's new foil. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter MILES EVANS is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room. The club resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment. The HANK JONES trio continues through Nov. 7. Starting Nov. 9: pianist DOROTHY DONEGAN leads her trio. Dining.

Time Café, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden inside this trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. Upstairs is a sumptuous Moroccan bar. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The MINGUS BIG BAND packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble, directed by baritone saxophonist Ronnie Cuber, concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, the late Charles Mingus. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. Through Nov. 7: the ANDREW HILL quartet. In a series of records done for Blue Note during the early sixties, pianist-composer Hill made some of the thorniest, most fiendishly constructed, uncategorizable jazz of an era de-

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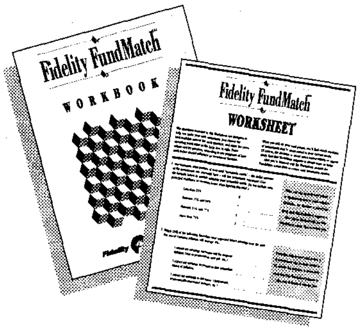

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fined by provocation and risk. Though Hill has mellowed—his tunes less angular, his rhythms straighter—there's still plenty of knottiness left. His younger associates include Greg Osby on alto saxophone, Lonnie Plaxico on bass, and Gene Jackson on drums. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and wondered about. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. **KIRK LIGHTSEY** and **CECIL MC BEE** appear through Nov. 6. The **MICHAEL LEONHART** quartet, featuring vocalist **CAROLYN LEONHART,** will be in on Sundays in November.

OUT AND ABOUT IN THE MEAT-MARKET DISTRICT

BAR AND BOOKS, 636 Hudson St., at Jane St. (229-2642)—Hidden behind deep-blue velvet curtains, this mahogany-panelled bar is as narrow and dark as they come: candles and small shaded lamps provide virtually the only light. Once you squeeze past the band, in the corner by the door, and navigate the stools and tables opposite the bar, you can sink into a plaid wraparound couch at the back, choose a book off a shelf, or just sip and listen. Port, sherry, and cognac are served, along with the predictable saloon staples, and three-piece jazz bands play after ten on Fridays and Saturdays.

FANNY'S OYSTER HOUSE, 765 Washington St., at W. 12th St. (255-5101)—You can eat at one of two tables just inside the door, or at one of several tables just inches apart in the back, or, on warm evenings, outside in the brick-walled courtyard. The mismatched china, upright piano, lace curtains, and wood-framed mirrors give the place a funky elegance—not a look normally associated with Cajun food and loud bands. The quiet stops completely around nine when the music—blues or swing or funk or rock and roll—starts up in the bar downstairs. Closed Mondays.

FLORENT, 69 Gansevoort St. (989-5779)—This eight-year-old, twenty-four-hour-a-day diner is carved out of the side of a meat-packing warehouse, yet has the nerve to serve chicken, fish, and vegetables (with French bistro trimmings). The restaurant is famous for its good food and grand celebrations: fêtes like Bastille Day in the Meat Market—a Gallic extravaganza of cross-dressing chorines, Piaf wannabes, and street venders—and a traditional Thanksgiving complete with gender-bending Pilgrims and Indians.

RIO MAR, 7 Ninth Ave., at Little W. 12th St. (242-1623)—A two-story Spanish restaurant-bar, where the tapas are free and dining takes place under bullfight murals on the second floor. The ground floor is well lit and spotlessly white—except for the dark-wood bar and beams, the red-tiled floor, and the yellow lamps in black iron fixtures mounted on the walls. There's space enough to dance to the tunes on the jukebox (conjunto, flamenco, Spanish ballads), or you can sit and shell peanuts and drink sangria. If you're lucky, the Spanish guitarist Diego Sabicas will come around and pair up with the singing maître d'.

TORTILLA FLATS, 767 Washington St., at W. 12th St. (243-1053)—Some of the items hanging from the low ceiling of this Mexican restaurant are piñatas, streamers, plastic gas-station flags, Christmas lights, skeletons, and paper fruit. The rest of the décor is straight from the border (there are three velvet Elvises on the walls), as is the food (tamales and green enchiladas), the beer (Negra Modelo), and the tequila (*con gusano!*). The music comes from the halcyon days of the seventies (AC/DC and Kiss mixed in with Allman Brothers medleys). On Fridays and Saturdays from 1 A.M. to 4, the Formica tables are stacked and the floor is cleared for dancing. And on Mondays and Tuesdays after 7, bingo is a tradition.

ART

Boxing Bickerton

IN the fall of 1986, Ashley Bickerton was one of four young artists—the others were Jeff Koons, Meyer Vaisman, and Peter Halley—in a group show at the Sonnabend Gallery that many still remember as the most putschlike maneuver of that frenzied, market-driven season. Bickerton's high-tech box constructions, some containing geological samples, suggested survivalist scuba gear or some sort of extreme mountaineering equipment, and were typically emblazoned with high-consumerist trademarks and logos, many humorously directed at the art world itself, as well as with dopey surfer-culture innuendos. Over the next few years, Bickerton was habitually included in the various biennials and assorted hullabaloos of the big-top exhibition circuit.

Things have since simmered down, and the beach-boyish Bickerton—who was born in Barbados, grew up in Hawaii, and graduated in 1982 from that notoriously influential hatchery the California Institute of the Arts—has lately had the time and mental space to ponder the waves. Judging from his current show (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway; through October 6), the artist has returned from limbo as a Gauguin manqué. Titled "Just Another Shitty Day in Paradise (A Travelogue)," Bickerton's appealingly dishevelled new body of work includes several objects that will seem familiar to Bickerton watchers. "Islands" and "Ash's Atoll," a pair of Rymanesque aluminum panels, are inscribed with maps that chart mythic sites with names like "Hangover Rocks (1 Nights Journey)" and "Cheap Sexual Gratification Key (3 Minutes by Paddle)." Bickerton is also charting what for him is fresh territory with some adventurously wonky stuff: funky totems, for instance, made of piled-up coconuts wearing canvas hats, and a few stupendously fat and pallid Buddhas—"first-day-on-the-beach Buddhas," according to the artist.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper, Selections from the Collection" begins with work from the mid-thirties and early forties, and concludes with several eclectic pieces from the mid-sixties. Through Nov. 7. . . . ¶ The museum's new Nineteenth-Century European Painting and Sculpture galleries are now open, featuring, among other works, van Gogh's "Wheat Field with Cypresses" (1889). . . . ¶ "Immortals and Sages: Fusuma Paintings from Ryoan-ji and the Lore of China in Japanese Art," an exhibition of seventeenth-century gold-leaf painting on sliding panels, originally from the abbot's quarters at Ryoan-ji, in Kyoto. . . . ¶ "Elephant: The Animal and Its Ivory in African Art" includes seventy objects, from elephant masks to intricately carved tusks, representing more than twenty different indigenous cultures. . . . ¶ "Versailles 1973: American Fashion on the World Stage." Through Nov. 28. . . . ¶ Twenty years of Hudson River School works on paper. Through Dec. 26. . . .

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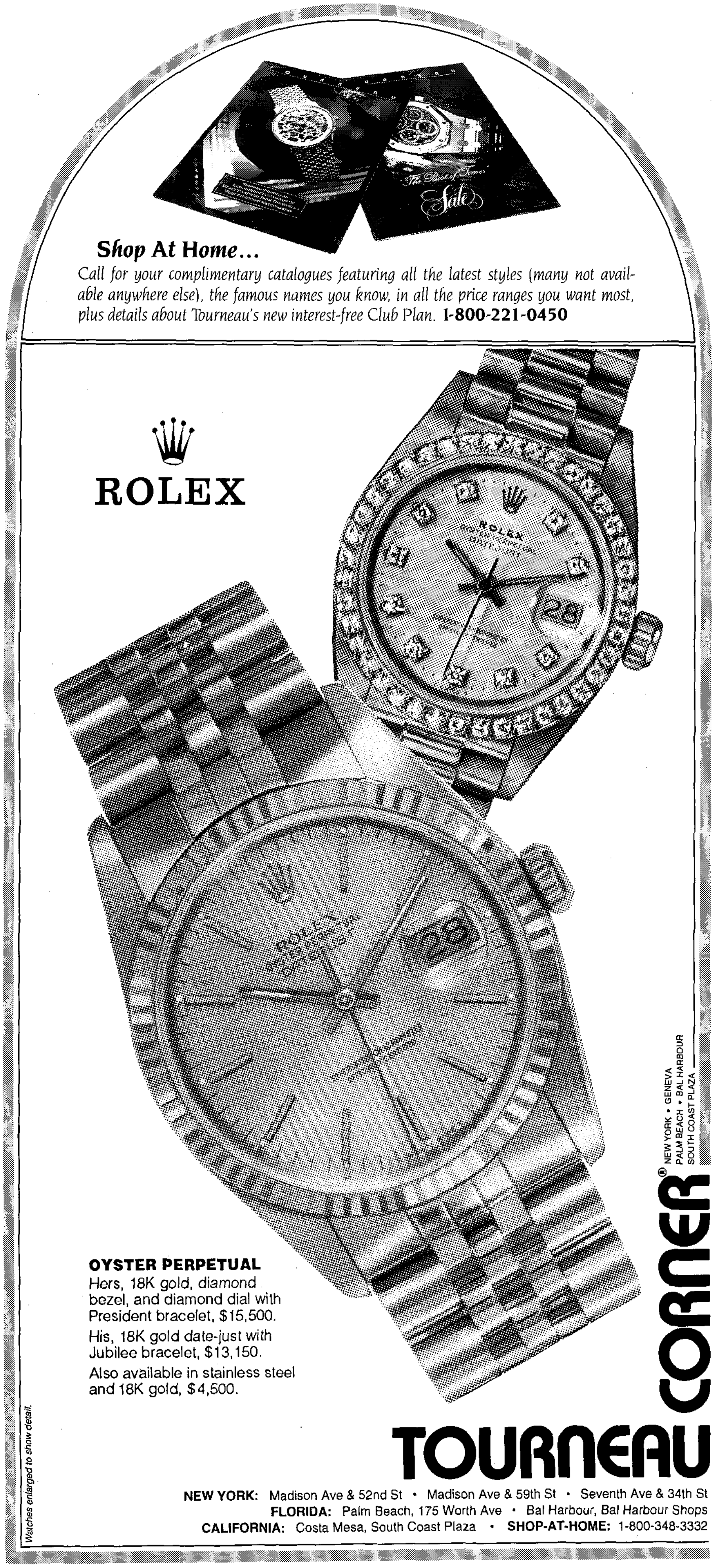
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¶ "Nineteenth-Century Portraits, Landscapes, and Nudes." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—Last year's Matisse extravaganza may have been an impossible act to follow, but the current Miró retrospective—celebrating the centennial of the Catalan master with some four hundred paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, and ceramics—is trying. Perhaps the most powerful interlude in the show is the series of twenty-three paintings known as "The Constellations" (1940-41). Works [illegible] dazzling complexity and innovation, they were begun in the seeming tranquillity [illegible] Miró's adopted home in Varengeville, France, and completed in Palma de Mallorca only after the artist and his family had made a harrowing retreat from the German advance. . . . ¶ A retrospective of paintings by Robert Ryman, who for the past thirty years has painted nothing but white-on-white canvases. They are like the pristine Pratesi linen bedsheets of the rich and famous. Room after room of these mute, determinedly materialistic paintings could suck the air from your lungs, and yet the precision and control of Ryman's touch—sometimes airy and brushy, sometimes flat and uninflected—remains compelling. This retrospective is among the most demanding in New York in many years. It may also be among the most rewarding for patient and assiduous eyes. . . . ¶ "Designed for Speed: Three Automobiles by Ferrari." MOMA's first automobile exhibition in more than fifteen years features three bodacious hot rods: a 1990 Formula One racing car, a 1987 F40 "supercar" (the fastest car available for purchase at the time), and a 1950 166MM Barchetta, the prototypical two-seat convertible. . . . ¶ "New Photography Nine" showcases four contemporary photographers whose work ranges from portraits of children in Knoxville, Tennessee, to images of squalor in Ukraine. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—More than a hundred paintings by Pop master Roy Lichtenstein. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8; closes Mondays at 6.)

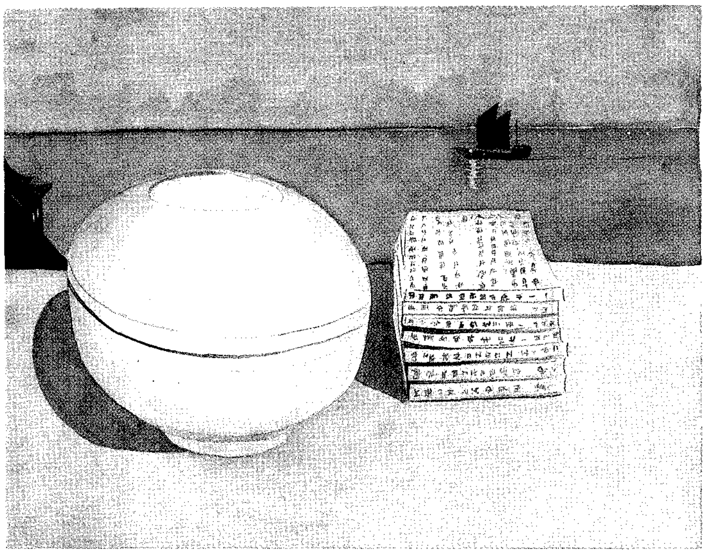
Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"Singular Dimensions in Painting," an exhibit of minimalist work, primarily from the fifties and sixties. Through Nov. 15. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—More than a hundred and sixty paintings, sculptures, drawings, and site-specific installations by Mike Kelley, a Los Angeles-based conceptual artist whose diverse influences range from Joseph Beuys to Iggy Pop. Opens Nov. 5. . . . ¶ "Betrothals," three important late canvases and related studies by Arshile Gorky (1904-48). . . . ¶ Paintings by Vija Celmins. Through Nov. 28. . . . ¶ "The Cave," a video installation by Beryl Korot, with music by Steve Reich. Through Nov. 28. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Two exhibitions that focus on lesser-known locales and conditions in Cuba and Antarctica via photographs, drawings, biological specimens, and dioramas. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Korean Arts of the Eighteenth Century: Splendor and Simplicity" includes a diverse selection of works, from highly wrought candlesticks to iridescent dividing screens. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—"As You Wish: Symbol and Meaning on Chinese Porcelains



Eighteenth-century Korean art at Asia Society.

GEOFFREY PARKER

from the Taft Museum" presents sixty-five stunning Qing-dynasty objects in terms of their iconography. Most have elegant polychrome decoration in *famille rose, verte, noire,* and *jaune.* (One unusual figurine, a war god, sprouts long whiskers of real hair.) Many of these porcelains date from the Kangxi period (1662-1722), when the first Manchu emperor promoted loyalty by commissioning vases illustrated with patriotic narrative scenes, often from popular novels. Other objects use symbols and pun-based rebuses to convey highly specific messages, like "May you have success in civil-service examinations." (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 7.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—"Kunisada's World." The second half of this exhibition contains over a hundred polychrome woodblock prints by Utagawa Kunisada (1786-1865). Luxuriously produced and in pristine condition, they should secure his reputation in the West, where he has been somewhat underappreciated, perhaps because of the decadence of the artist (and his era) and his slick treatments of sensational subjects—as in a blood-spattered Kabuki scene where one man is bisected, two are decapitated, and another's face is sliced off. But erotic illustrations, like one showing a man encouraging a coy woman to imitate the sexual contortions depicted on a hand-scroll, or another showing a copulating couple startled by a noisy flight of geese outside their window, are full of gentle, irresistible wit. Through November 14. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"The Dead Sea Scrolls: Ancient Civilization / Modern Scholarship." Twelve Scrolls are on display, along with related artifacts, models, and maps, on loan from the Israel Antiquities Authority. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with shows opening this week.)

Mary Ann Currier—A continuation of the "Postcard Series," started by the artist four years ago: still-lifes with larger-than-life images of fruit and studio objects, art books, and reproductions of well-known paintings by Gauguin, Whistler, Titian, and other masters. Opens Nov. 5. Through Dec. 4. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

Nicola De Maria—Lyrical abstractions, plus a mural installation, by a member of the Italian Transavanguardia, a group of painters who rebelled against the rigidity of Arte Povera in the late-seventies. Opens Nov. 4. Through Dec. 24. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Louis Michel Eilshemius (1864-1941) / **Michael Steiner**—Nudes and landscapes by a visionary Romantic in the vein of Albert Pinkham Ryder. / Recent steel sculptures by a minimalist of the sixties. Opens Nov. 3. Through Nov. 27. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Joan Fontcuberta—A Barcelona artist whose photograms are based on fine-art reproductions overlaid with the actual objects depicted in them. Opens Nov. 3. Through Dec. 11. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

David Humphrey—Paintings in which pictures from a family album are combined with imagery in an autobiographical exploration of memory. Opens Nov. 4. Through Dec. 4. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Darragh Park—Paintings of landscapes, cityscapes, and baseball stadiums. Opens Nov. 4. Through Nov. 30. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Marco Tirelli—Paper-on-canvas works, in watercolor and charcoal, with cones, spheres, funnels, and crosses. Opens Nov. 4. Through Dec. 18. (Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St.)

James Turrell—Works on paper and documentation related to the artist's long-term project to reshape a crater in the Painted Desert. Opens Nov. 6. Through Dec. 2. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Benar Venet—Sculptures by a French artist that resemble giant bent springs laid sideways. Opens Nov. 4. Through Dec. 4. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Paintings from the Collection of James H. Ricau"—Nineteenth-century paintings amassed by this late pioneering collector of American art. Rich in still-lifes, the show includes Raphaelle Peale's "Peaches" (1817). Opens Nov. 4. Through Jan. 8. (York, 21 E. 65th St.)

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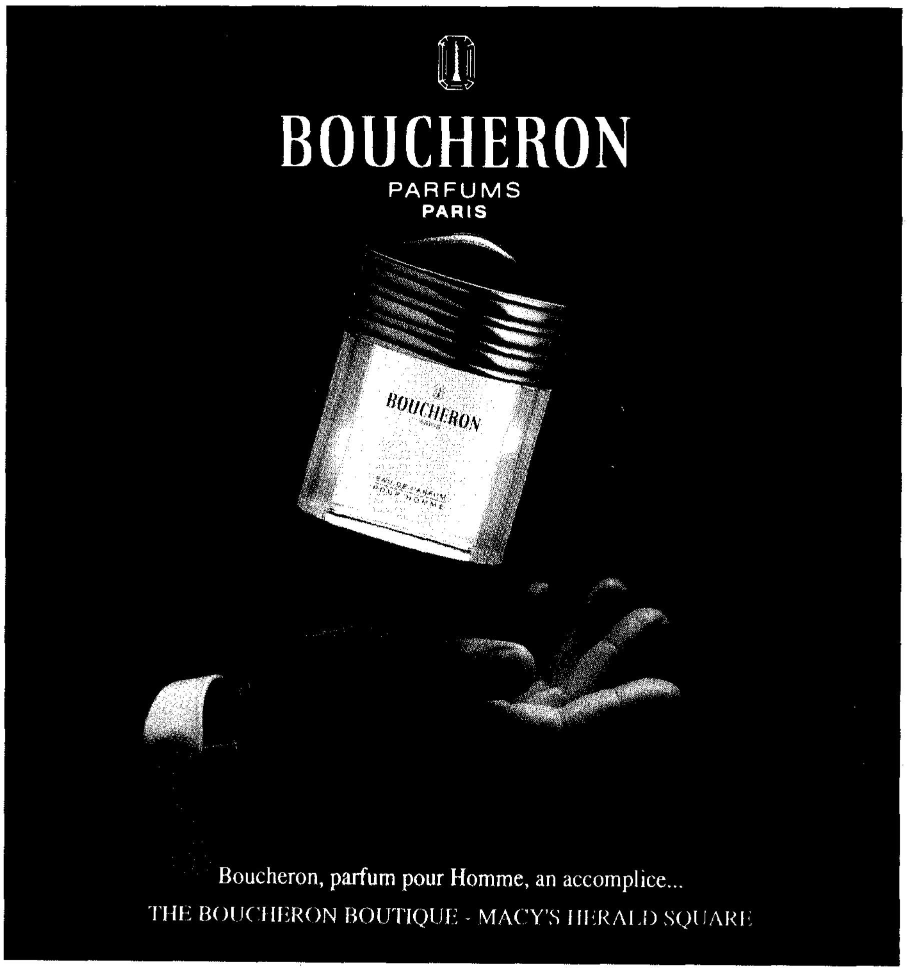
Alexander Archipenko (1887-1964)—Works in bronze, wood, terra-cotta, and Plexiglas. Through Nov. 13. (Adler, 41 E. 57th St.)

Robert Arneson (1930-92)—A memorial exhibition of paintings and sculptures from the past twenty years, including a 1972 self-portrait, a bronze portrait of Jackson Pollock, and the centerpiece of the show, "Guardians of the Secret II," Arneson's last major work. Through Nov. 16. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Fernando Botero—Sculpture and drawings on canvas. Through Nov. 6. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.) . . . **note:** Botero's corpulent bronze figures can be seen on the Park Avenue Mall from 54th to 61st Sts. Through Nov. 14.

Fritz Bultman (1919-85)—Abstract Expressionist drawings from the years 1958 to 1961 by one of the Irascibles, a group that included Pollock, Kline, and Motherwell. Through Nov. 23. (Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St.)

R. Crumb / H. R. Giger—A retrospective of Crumb's work, along with rarely seen images from his personal correspondence and sketchbooks. / Paintings and drawings, specially designed furniture, and engraved stain-



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less-steel floor tiles by a Swiss artist, best known for his design work on the film "Alien." Through Dec. 23. (Alexander, 980 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

Willem de Kooning—Drawings from throughout the artist's career. Through Dec. 31. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Jim Dine—"Ape & Cat" is a group of new bronze-and-wood sculptures, accompanied by several drawings on plywood, in charcoal, pastel, enamel, and shellac. Through Nov. 27. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Jared French (1905-88) / **Debra Bermingham**—Drawings from the sixties. / New paintings and drawings. Both through Nov. 13. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Lawrence Gipe—Paintings based on Robert Moses projects in New York. Through Nov. 27. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Edward Hopper (1882-1967)—A mini-retrospective of paintings spanning five decades. Through Nov. 13. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Tobi Kahn—Abstract paintings derived from geological or biological forms. Through Nov. 27. (Ryan, 24 W. 57th St.)

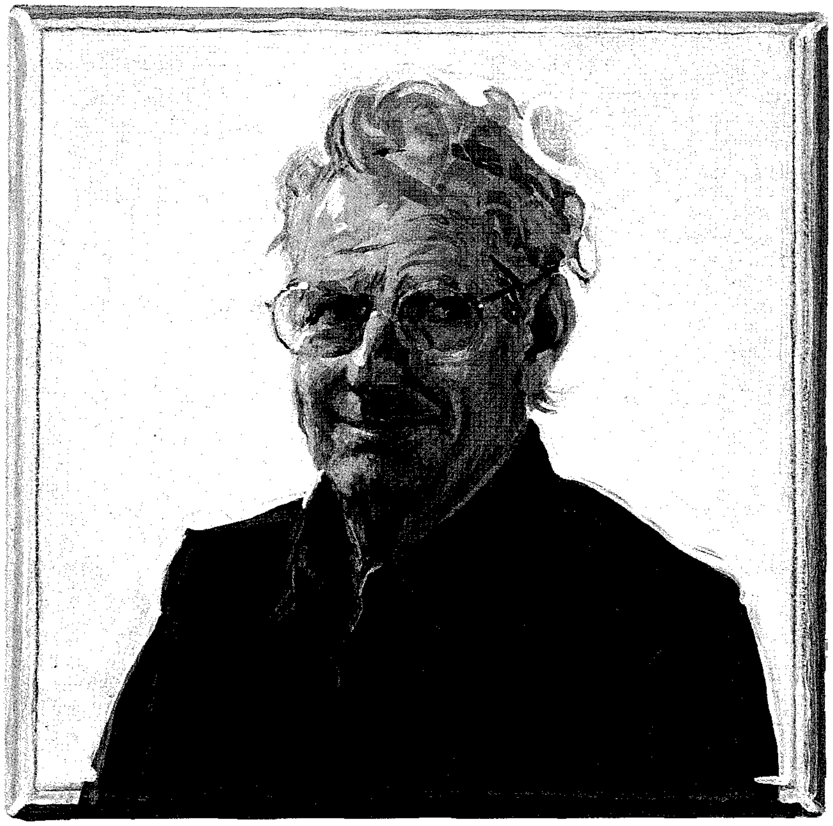
Boris Margo—An exhibition of work from 1932 to 1952 revealing this Russian painter's evolution from Surrealism to abstraction. Through Nov. 13. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St.)

Joan Nelson—Speckles, cracks, dots, and scratches challenge the serenity of fifteen untitled landscapes painted on wood, in which Nelson effects an exquisite tension between the permanence of nature—velvety green trees and idyllic skies—and its inevitable decay. Through Nov. 20. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Jackson Pollock (1912-56)—A modest show of drip paintings from 1948 and 1949. Through Dec. 11. (C&M, 45 E. 78th St. Closed Tuesdays.)

George Rickey—Abstract stainless-steel kinetic sculptures by an eighty-six-year-old artist. Through Nov. 20. (Davidson, 41 E. 57th St.)

Wayne Thiebaud—A retrospective of watercolors, drawings, and prints from 1964 to the present, including some preparatory studies from the artist's own collection. Thiebaud began his career in commercial art, which perhaps explains the graphic appeal of his still-lifes of cakes and candies. He delights in doing multiple versions of a particular print, often with very different results. In general, his colored versions tend to be luscious—as in "Candy Apples" or "Boston Cremes"—whereas his black-and-white works are ascetic almost to the point of abstraction: the bold lines in the woodcut "Half Cakes" create a purely formal effect, and the confectionery display of "Candy Counter" is merely a point of departure for geometric configurations. Thiebaud's candy images sometimes seem more monumental than his views of San Francisco, although his black-and-white highway landscapes are stunning. Through Nov. 27. (Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St.)



Self-portrait by Wayne Thiebaud.

"Miró and New York"—A show of paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by artists who were influenced by Miró's New York exhibitions in the thirties and forties, among them Ilya Bolotowsky, Arshile Gorky, and David Hare. Through Nov. 27. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.) . . . ¶ Miró paintings and works on paper from 1927 to 1951. Through Nov. 24. (Cohen, 1018 Madison Avenue at 78th St.)

DOWNTOWN

Donald Baechler—Collage paintings combining drawings of figures, abstract forms, and layered pigment. Opens Nov. 6. Through Dec. 4. (Kasmin, 74 Grand St.)

Lorenzo Bonechi—Vivid paintings of elongated figures in minimal classical settings. Opens Nov. 6. Through Dec. 23. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Ted Byfield and Lincoln Tobier—"Cop Sculpture," a joint project of two installations using newspaper photographs of contraband seized by law-enforcement agencies. Opens Nov. 6. Through Dec. 31. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St., and American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St.)

Konrad Klapheck—Paintings and drawings, dating from 1978 to the present, by a Düsseldorf artist who restricts himself to images of adding machines, sewing machines, telephones, showerheads, and industrial machinery, all rendered monumental. Opens Nov. 6. Through Dec. 22. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Judy Mannarino—Paintings in which patterns are layered in a hierarchy of abstraction. Opens Nov. 4. Through Nov. 27. (Ledisflam, 130 Prince St.)

Oleg Vassiliev—Russian landscapes by an underground artist of the pre-perestroika period. Opens Nov. 6. Through Nov. 30. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

"The Return of the Cadavre Exquis"—Collaborative drawings by participants in a game in which one player draws a head, then folds the paper to conceal the drawing from the next player, who adds a torso, and so on. Opens Nov. 6. Through Dec. 18. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St.)

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Chuck Close—A new group of his trademark portraits of contemporary artists. Through Nov. 27. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Steve DiBenedetto—Paintings combining traditional imagery with imagery that appears to have been computer-generated. Through Nov. 13. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

Carroll Dunham—New drawings, including "Inverted Chartreuse," in which an unbroken horizon connects a sequence of ten shapes. Through Nov. 13. (Nolan-Eckman, 560 Broadway.)

Christian Garnett—Veils of paint which were incised while wet to expose the underlying surface. Though Nov. 17. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

Ann Hamilton—A site-specific installation involving horsehair, scorched paper, and a tape-recorded voice. (Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Robert Kushner—Large-scale paintings with floral motifs, in which the paint surface is *embellished with gold, silver, and copp*[illegible] leaf and bronzing powder. Through Nov. 2[illegible] (Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St.)

Sean Landers—Green-glazed terra-cotta sculptures of leprechauns, among other works. Through Nov. 27. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Glenn Ligon—Large black-and-white paintings that incorporate James Brown lyrics and Richard Pryor jokes. Through Nov. 20. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Robert Longo—Large-scale charcoal-and-graphite drawings of handguns, plus a single sculpture made of twenty thousand bullets. Through Nov. 27. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Joan Miró (1893-1983)—Gouaches, prints, a painting on wood, letters, and rare photographs. Through Nov. 13. (Prats, 568 Broadway.)

Reinhard Mucha—A survey of work from the past ten years: large vitrines and sculptures in various mediums, showing a concern with memory and personal history (symbolic reconstructions of train stations are recurrent). Through Nov. 20. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

Ross Neher—Atmospheric abstract paintings that achieve their effect with subtle shifts of color and light. Through Nov. 13. (Beitzel, 102 Prince St.)

Ellen Phelan—A dozen paintings, in oil on linen, of dolls' faces. As usual, *the artist made these works* only after completing a corresponding series in gouache and watercolor (on view in December). Through Nov. 27. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Erika Rothenberg and Tracy Tynan—"Suicide Notes" is a morbid but fascinating installation of grisly epistles on black vinyl body bags, documenting each dead person's age, sex, and method of suicide. Through Nov. 13. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

Tony Scherman—Paintings based on the story of the rape of Callisto from Ovid's Metamorphoses. Through Nov. 13. (Stux, 163 Mercer St.)

Lydia Schouten—Installation works on paper. Through Nov. 20. (Saul, 560 Broadway.)

Hugh Steers—Traditional works—genre scenes, in fact—with a depressed, thirties feel. Steers' technique is good, if not transcendent, but it is his allegorical imagination that makes his work so satisfying. The grandest painting in the show is "Urinals," an elegy to Allen Schindler, the gay sailor who was beaten to death last year by a hostile Navy shipmate. Through Nov. 13. (Richard Anderson, 476 Broome Street.)

Gunter Umberg—New monochromatic paintings and works on paper. Through Nov. 13. (Stark, 594 Broadway.)

John Wilcox—New abstract paintings that incorporate Biblical texts. Through Nov. 13. (Fawbush, 76 Grand St.)

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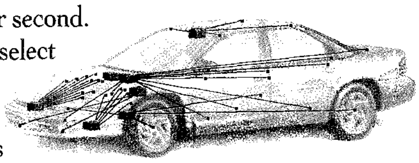

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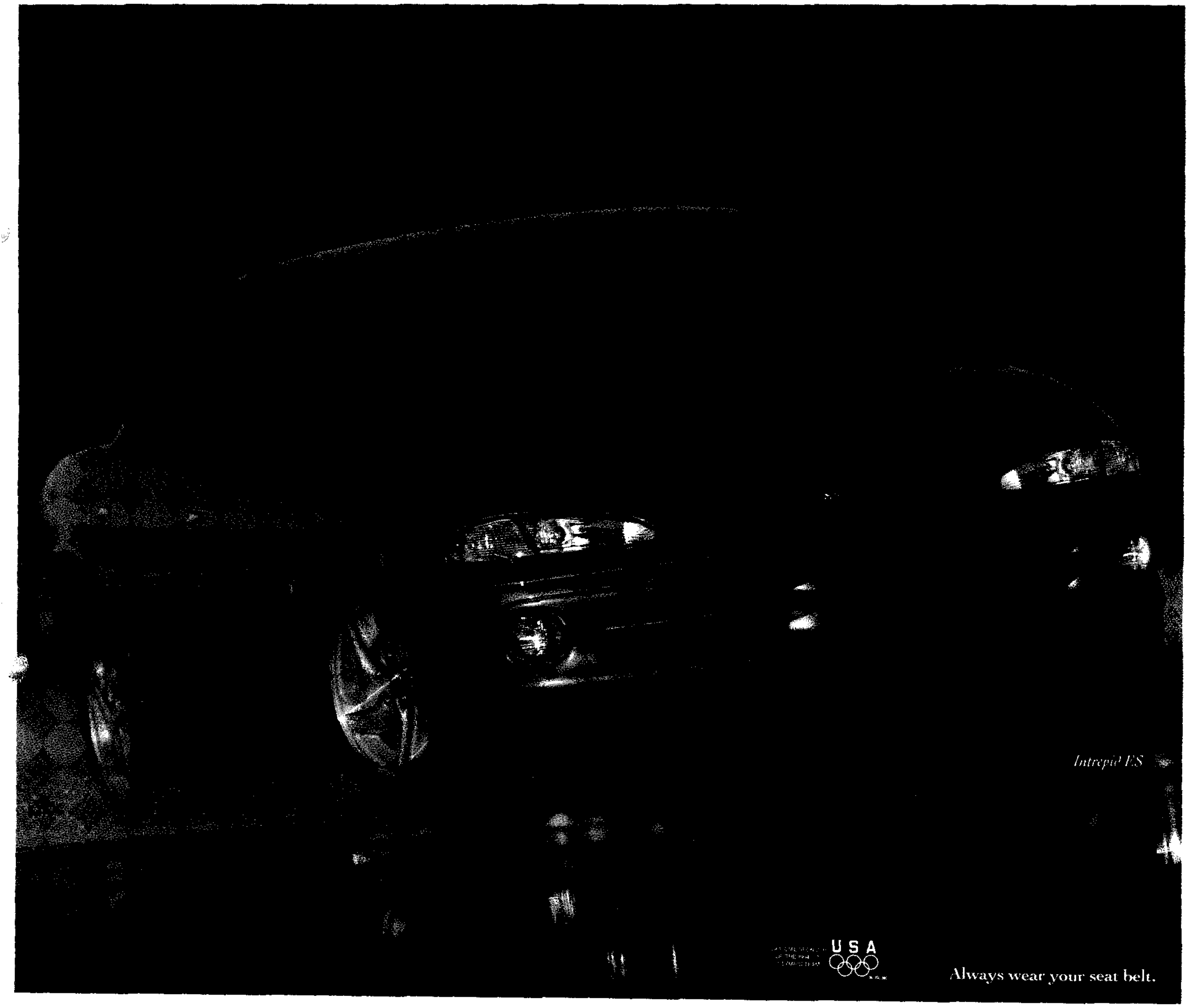


ART–Cont'd

"Putt-Modernism"—An entertaining and provocative eighteen-hole miniature-golf course, in which each hole was designed by a different artist. You can rent a putter for five bucks, or just look for free. Through Feb. 27. (Fulton Market Building, South Street Seaport, Pier 16, East River at Fulton St. The course is open Thursdays through Saturdays, from noon to midnight, and Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, from noon to 10.)

AUCTIONS

Sotheby's, York Ave. at 72nd St. (606-7176)—It's almost unheard of for a private stash of eighty-eight Picassos to exist unbeknownst to anyone in the art world, but such is the case with the collection of Stanley J. Seeger, a recluse living as an expatriate in Europe, whose family made its fortune in Texas oil. The auction record for a Picasso—$53,000,000 for "The Marriage of Jeanette," which sold in Paris in the fall of 1989—is not expected to be broken. Rather, the interest is in the range of mediums and prices: from "The Old Man" (1903), a drawing related to three major paintings of the artist's Blue Period (estimate: $8,000-$10,000), to a unique glazed-ceramic plate from 1948 (estimate: $40,000-$60,000), to the big 1932 oil "Woman and Children by the Sea" (estimate: $2,500,000-$3,500,000). They go on the block Nov. 4 at 7 P.M.

Christie's, Park Ave. at 59th St. (546-1119)—An important abstract work by Arshile Gorky, "Year After Year" (estimate: $3,000,000), is the highlight of the Contemporary Art sale on Nov. 9 at 7 P.M. The abstract, dating from 1947, is said to represent a view of the Housatonic River near Gorky's house in Sherman, Connecticut. (Gorky's work is also represented in a small show at the Whitney.)

Illustration House, 96 Spring St. (966-9444)—If it's pulp you're after, the fall auction here, on Nov. 6 at 1 P.M., offers plenty, notably George Rozen's original 1947 oil for the magazine *Frontier*, in which a rifle-bearing frontiersman rescues a beautiful woman from a train wreck, a prairie fire, and rampaging Indians all at once (estimate: $2,500-$3,500). Also original movie-poster art, comics, and cartoons spanning the past hundred years. The works can be previewed Nov. 3-5, from 10:30 to 5:30.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Peter Campus—Computer-altered color photographs. Through Nov. 12. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

William Eggleston—Recent work. Through Nov. 20. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940)—Hine is best known for his harsh realist photography, particularly his work documenting Ellis Island, child labor, and industrial squalor. Through Nov. 13. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

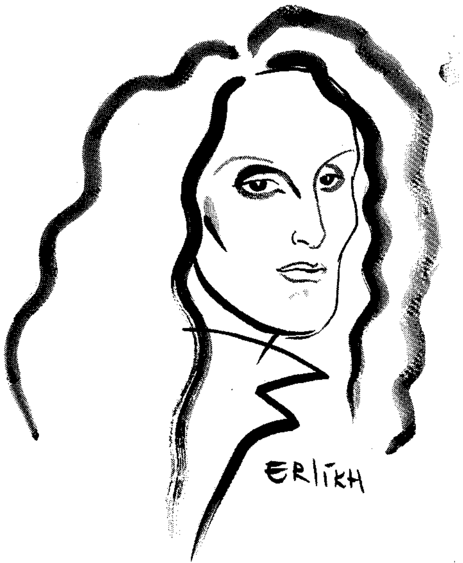
Roxanne Lowit—"Moments," a series of black-and-white photographs that capture the late seventies and early eighties in all their glory, from rich and glamorous types dancing at Studio 54 and Area to portraits of celebrities forever associated with the period, like Andy Warhol and Divine. Through Nov. 27. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway.)

George Segal—A series of twenty-five black-and-white photographs of the streets of New York and New Jersey by the well-known sculptor. Through Nov. 27. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

Cy Twombly—Twombly's photographic début features subject matter that includes tulips, trees, and Roman antiquities. Through Dec. 4. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

William Wegman—Selections from the artist's new book, "Little Red Riding Hood," which features Wegman's famous Weimaraners dressed up in the fairy-tale roles. Through Nov. 27. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

"Short Stories: Celebrating Twenty Years of 'Vogue' Fashion by Grace Coddington"—More than four hundred photographs from the pages of *Vogue*. Through Nov. 24. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)



GRACE CODDINGTON, *a fashion director of "Vogue," has collaborated with many of the great fashion photographers of the past quarter century, leaving her mark in classic images and sequences by Parkinson, Bailey, Meisel, Elgort, Weber, and others. A master stylist, she helps create the visual narrative that brings design and beauty to life on the page. Her achievement is celebrated this month in an absorbing show at the Danziger gallery.*

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

A Little Knowledge

MUSIC festivals, once content to merely entertain, have lately assumed an overtly pedagogical role, with talk-and-play weekends threatening to become commonplace. This week, Lincoln Center offers a condensed version of the Dvořák convocation held last summer at Bard College. (Music lovers with an insatiable appetite for the Composer of the Year could have been expected to make the two-hour trip upriver for the original.) Slavic music will also be served at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, with the fare tending toward more recent Eastern European composers of a purportedly mystical bent. Both festivals intersperse chamber and symphonic concerts among scholarly lectures, staged conversations, or purposeful panel discussions. Though a rapprochement between the arts and the humanities is heartening, a restraining hand may be needed to keep academia from locking the lively arts in a stranglehold. And since such festivals have sprouted most readily around orchestras that stand beneath the top rung—in this case, the American Symphony Orchestra at Lincoln Center and the Brooklyn Philharmonic at BAM—one fears that the verbal add-ons may serve to distract from rather than encourage a more polished musical performance.

It's a pity that audiences who enjoy this approach must choose between two on the same weekend. In contrast, the Sonic Boom Festival, now in progress, demonstrates commendable coördination among musical organizations. In the space of a month, five of the city's prominent new-music groups link their otherwise unrelated concerts into a musical cornucopia that stands as a series of riotous diversity, with no lectures attached.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 854-7799.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE**, with Sylvia McNair, Ruth Welting, Frank Lopardo, Mark Oswald, and Eric Halfvarson; conducted by James Levine. (Nov. 3 at 8 and Nov. 6 at 1:30.) . . . Conducted by Ion Marin. (Nov. 9 at 8.) . . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY**, with Yoko Watanabe, Wendy White, Franco Farina, and Kim Josephson; Christian Badea. (Nov. 4 at 8.) . . . **LA BOHÈME**, with Veronica Villarroel, Carol Neblett, Richard Leech, and Timothy Noble; Carlo Rizzi. (Nov. 5 and Nov. 8 at 8.) . . . **STIFFELIO**, by Verdi, with Sharon Sweet, Plácido Domingo, Vladimir Chernov, and Paul Plishka; James Levine. (Nov. 6 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—**LA RONDINE**. (Nov. 3 and Nov. 6 at 8.) . . . **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO**. (Nov. 4 at 8 and Nov. 7 at 1:30.) . . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY**. (Nov. 5 at 8.) . . . **TOSCA**. (Nov. 6 at 1:30.) . . . **CINDERELLA**, a stage adaptation of the 1957 television musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein, opens a two-week run. (Nov. 9 at 8; through Nov. 21, when the company's season ends.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ARTEK—Presenting a rare staging of Monteverdi's first opera, "Orfeo," from 1607; here with English supertitles. Only three of Monteverdi's dozen operas have survived; reports that a complete score has surfaced for a fourth—"Arianna," hitherto known only by an excerpt—remain a tantalizing rumor. Soprano Dana Hanchard and tenor Jeffrey Thomas head the cast; Gwendolyn Toth conducts an eighteen-piece period-instrument orchestra. (The Hall at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. Nov. 4-7 at 8. For information about tickets, call 873-0473.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Christopher Keene conducts Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis," the première of Tison Street's "Bright Sambas," Poulenc's Two-Piano Concerto (featuring Ursula Oppens and Alan Feinberg), and Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite. (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 4-6 at 8 and Nov. 9 at 7:30.)

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND—From the halls of Montezuma to the stage of Carnegie. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 3 at 8:30.)

ST. PETERSBURG PHILHARMONIC—At Carnegie Hall. Nov. 5 at 8: Yuri Temirkanov conducts Rimsky-Korsakov's Prelude to "The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitzeh and the Maiden Fevronya" and Rachmaninoff's "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" (with pianist Dmitri Alexeev) and Symphony No. 2. . . . ¶ Nov. 6 at 8: Yuri Temirkanov conducts Tchaikovsky's Suite No. 3 and Symphony No. 6. . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 3: Mariss Jansons conducts Rossini's "La Gazza Ladra" Overture, Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (with Shlomo Mintz), and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10.

"EASTERN EUROPEAN MYSTICS"—A weekend-long festival, with educational conversations interspersed along the way. Nov. 5-6 at 8: Dennis Russell Davies conducts the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra in Arvo Pärt's Symphony No. 3 and "Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten," Giya Kancheli's "Mourned by the Wind" (in its United States première, here featuring violist Kim Kashkashian), and the "Metamorphosen" of Richard Strauss (who, of course, was not Eastern European in the least). (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.) . . . Nov. 7 at 3: Chamber music by Górecki (the United States première of his "Kleines Requiem für eine Polka"), Shostakovich, and Sofia Gubaidulina. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, Carey Playhouse, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

"DVOŘÁK AND HIS WORLD"—At Alice Tully Hall. A condensation of this past summer's Dvořák festival at Bard College. Nov. 6 at 12:30: Chamber music by Dvořák and Chadwick. . . . At 4: Songs and piano music on American and Czech national themes, by Dvořák and others. . . . At 8: Leon Botstein conducts the American Symphony Orchestra in Dvořák's Te Deum and "The Wild Dove," as well as works by Victor Herbert, Rubin Goldmark, and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 1:30: Chamber music by Dvořák's Czech contemporaries and followers Smetana, Novák, Suk, and Janáček. . . . At 4:30: Leon Botstein conducts the American Symphony Orchestra in Fibich's "At Twilight," Suk's "Phantasie for Violin and Orchestra" (featuring Mark Kaplan), Janáček's "The Fiddler's Child," and Dvořák's Symphony No. 5. (Lectures precede each concert.)

COSMOPOLITAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—Emil De Cou conducts late works by Tchaikovsky: his symphonic ballad "The Voyevoda" (Op. 78), excerpts from the opera "Iolanta" (featuring baritone Michael Dash), the Piano Concerto No. 3 (with William Wolfram), and the Symphony No. 6. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Nov. 6 at 2. . . . **NOTE**: In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 1 and open to ticket holders, the Cosmopolitan Chamber

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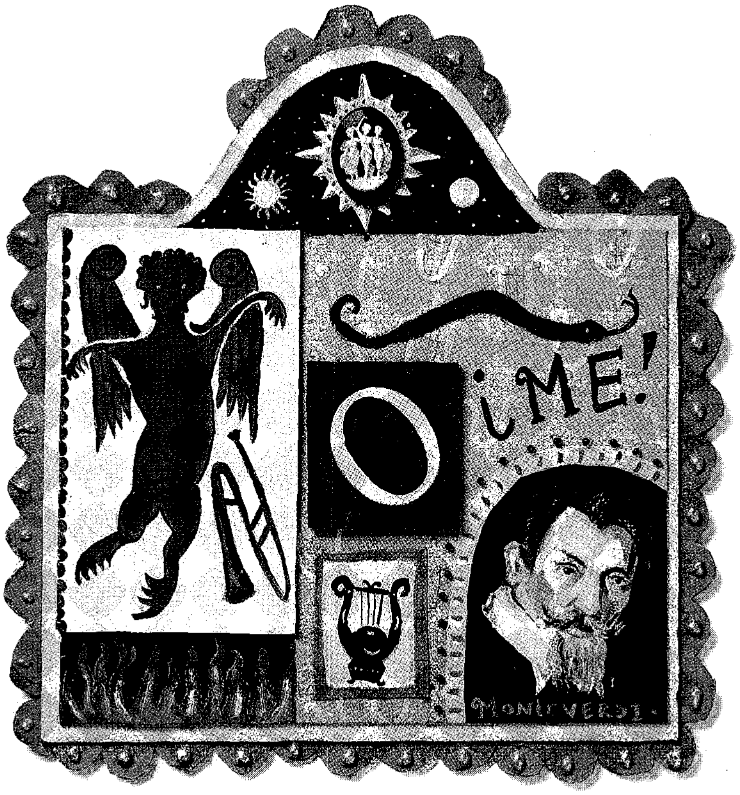
Ensemble will perform Tchaikovsky's string sextet “Souvenir de Florence.”)

Bolshoi Symphony—Alexander Lazarev conducts Russia's oldest orchestra (founded in 1776) in an all-Tchaikovsky program: the “Capriccio Italien,” the Sixth Symphony, and the letter scene from “Eugene Onegin” (with soprano Maria Gavrilova). (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. Nov. 7 at 2.)

Musica Viva—Walter Klauss directs the choir in Norman Dello Joio's “A Jubilant Song,” choral songs by Brahms, and Orff's “Carmina Burana.” (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. 535-5530. Nov. 7 at 7.)

Goliard—The organization's chorale, chamber orchestra, and chamber ensemble collaborate on a program that comprises Handel's “Dixit Dominus,” Grazyna Bacewicz's Divertimento for String Orchestra, and Brahms' Piano Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 7 at 7:30.)

Clarion Concerts—Newell Jenkins conducts the period-instrument orchestra, the Philadelphia Singers, and soloists Lena Nordin (soprano) and Karl-Magnus Fredriksson (baritone) in works by Joseph Martin Kraus, including excerpts (sung in Swedish) from the operas “Oedip” and “Azire.” Kraus was born in Germany in 1756 (the same year as Mozart, whom he survived by only a year), but was principally attached to the court in Stockholm. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 9 at 8.)



Artek offers Monteverdi's “Orfeo” at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin.

SUSAN SAAS

RECITALS

Tatiana Nikolaeva—The pianist concludes her traversal of Shostakovich's twenty-four Preludes and Fugues (Op. 87). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 3 at 8.)

Jan Opalach—The bass-baritone performs songs by John Musto, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (her cycle “Einsame Nacht”), Carl Loewe, Donald Martino, John Duke, and others; with pianist Ted Taylor. (Miller Theatre. Nov. 3 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Cellist Jian Wang and pianist Sung-Mi Im perform Chopin's G-Minor Cello Sonata; violinist Theodore Arm joins them for trios by Mozart (in B-Flat, K. 502) and Dvořák (in F Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Nov. 4 at 7:30 and Nov. 7 at 4.)

Ann Monoyios—Soprano, performing French songs from the seventeenth through the early-nineteenth centuries, including *airs de cour,* songs by Lambert and Couperin, and songs by Berlioz; with lutenist Christopher Kendall and harpsichordist-fortepianist Andrew Appel. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 4 at 8. . . . **Note:** In a pre-concert program beginning at 7:15 and open to ticket holders, actor Louis Turenne will read poems, letters, and other literary items contemporary with the songs on Ms. Monoyios' program.)

Evelyne Crochet—The pianist performs Chopin's Twenty-four Preludes (Op. 28), George Crumb's “Processional,” and Bach's Partita No. 6. (Miller Theatre. Nov. 4 at 8.)

Ilan Rechtman—Pianist, performing Beethoven's “Thirty-two Variations in C-Minor,” sonatas by Liszt and Prokofiev (his Seventh), and six of his own “Jazzicals.” (Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 4 at 8.)

Igor Kipnis—Performing eighteenth-century keyboard music on the fortepiano, including Haydn's Andante and Variations in F Minor and Jan Ladislav Dussek's “The Sufferings of the Queen of France.” (Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 5 at 8.)

Sergio and Odair Assad—Duo-guitarists, performing works by Scarlatti, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Ginastera, and others. (Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 5 at 8.)

Alberto Neuman—The Argentine pianist offers two separate programs. Nov. 5 at 8:30: Tangos by Stravinsky, Satie, Nazareth, and others. . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 8:30: An all-Debussy recital. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway, near Broome St. 966-9520.)

Sharon Robinson and Ilana Vered—The cellist and the pianist perform sonatas by Beethoven (his Second), Grieg, and Rachmaninoff. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Nov. 6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Yale Music Spectrum—Presenting chamber works by Couperin, Beethoven, Janáček (his Concertino for Piano and Six Instruments), and Chausson (his Concert for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet). (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 6 at 8.)

Two Times Five—The Quintet of the Americas and the Quinteto de Vientos Latinoamericano (from Venezuela) alternate in woodwind works by Villa-Lobos and William Bergsma, and join forces for pieces by Chandler Carter and Gounod (his “Petite Symphonie”). A benefit concert. (Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 6 at 8:30.)

Remembering Sasha—Decades of music lovers knew this violinist as Alexander Schneider, but to his colleagues and to the countless young musicians he encouraged he was always Sasha. Nine of the latter remember their late mentor with an all-Bach program. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. Nov. 7 at 2.)

Mannes Trio—Performing the première of John Anthony Lennon's “Sirens,” plus piano trios by Chopin and Ravel. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Nov. 7 at 2:45.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra purvey a trio sonata by Jan Dismas Zelenka, Prokofiev's Sonata for Two Violins, and Brahms' G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 7 at 3.)

Amadeus Trio—Performing piano trios by Beethoven (the “Ghost”), Shostakovich, and Dvořák (in F Minor). (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Nov. 7 at 5.)

New York Festival of Song—A program of art songs whose texts describe Heaven and its inhabitants, though not from firsthand accounts. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. Nov. 7 at 5.)

Cosmopolitan Chamber Ensemble—Performing Tchaikovsky's “Souvenir de Florence.” (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Nov. 7 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Griegorama—Grieg, the sesquicentennial of whose birth is being fervently celebrated by Norwegians this year, has never lacked for detractors. Once (the story goes), when he dropped by Brahms' home to show off some of his compositions at the piano, Brahms listened while leaning out the window and waving to people on the street below. Asked later about his strange behavior, Brahms explained that he didn't want anyone who overheard the piano to imagine that it was he who was playing. Others view Grieg in a more compassionate light, including the members of the Edvard Grieg Society of New York, which will present a mostly Grieg concert comprising songs (featuring soprano Torgun Birkeland) and orchestral music (the “Norwegian Dances,” Op. 35, and “Incidental Music to ‘Sigurd Jorsalfar,’ ” Op. 56), in addition to Johan Kvandal's new Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra (with duo-pianists Bradshaw & Buono); with Per Brevig conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 7 at 8.)

Sonic Boom Festival—This year's monthlong celebration of the new continues with a concert by the New York New Music Ensemble, which will present works by Wuorinen, Birtwistle, Davies, and C. Bryan Rulon—all based on medieval and Renaissance pieces—as well as recent compositions by Ray Shattenkirk, David Lang, and Richard Festinger. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 8 at 8.)

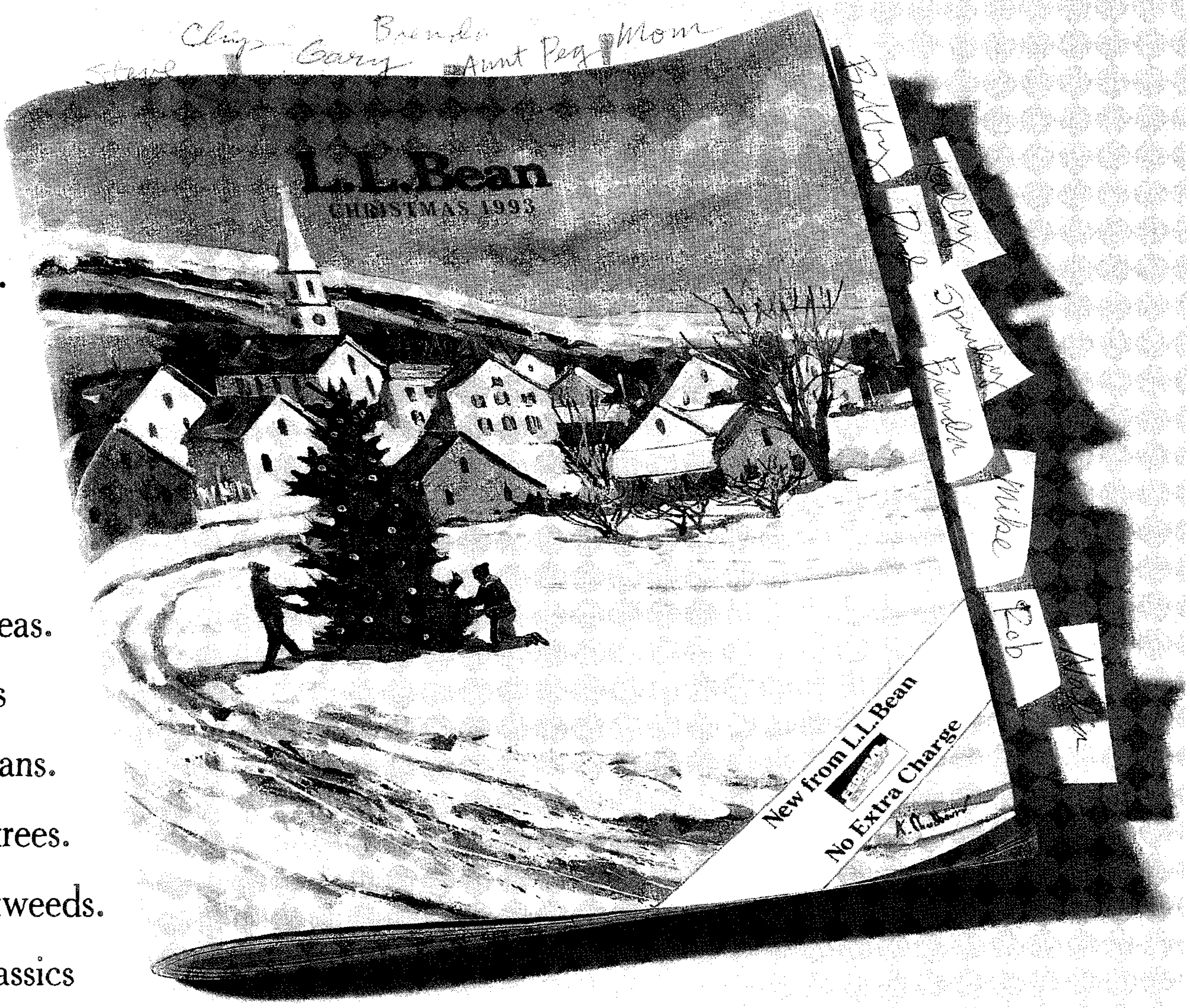
Keyboard Romantics—David Dubal discusses the piano music of Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt; Juilliard students assist with the music. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Nov. 9 at 7:30.)

Bella Davidovich—The pianist performs Mozart's F-Major Sonata (K. 332); rhapsodies, intermezzos, and waltzes by Brahms; and a plateful of Chopin (nocturnes, études, the Third Ballade, and the Polonaise-fantaisie). (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 9 at 8.)

Minerva World Première Series—This new chamber-music series will make a point of including at least one new work by a woman composer in each concert. The opening concert will accordingly include the première of a tango-and-jazz-inspired fanfare by Deidre Murray (“#5 Minute Tango,” played by the Manhattan Brass Quintet) and Deborah Drattel's “Salomé's Dance” (a New York première, with saxophonist Cynthia Sikes). Also appearing on this broadly ranging program are soprano Benita Valente; flutists Eugenia Zukerman and Ransom Wilson; pianists Earl Wild, Gary Graffman, and Cynthia Raim; the Lark String Quartet; and Cello (a cello quartet). (Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 9 at 8.)

Andiamo Chamber Ensemble—Performing and discussing Shostakovich's E-Minor Piano Trio and Messiaen's “Quartet for the End of Time,” among other works written in reaction to war. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Nov. 9 at 8. Tickets at the door the night of the concert.)

L.L. All Wrapped Up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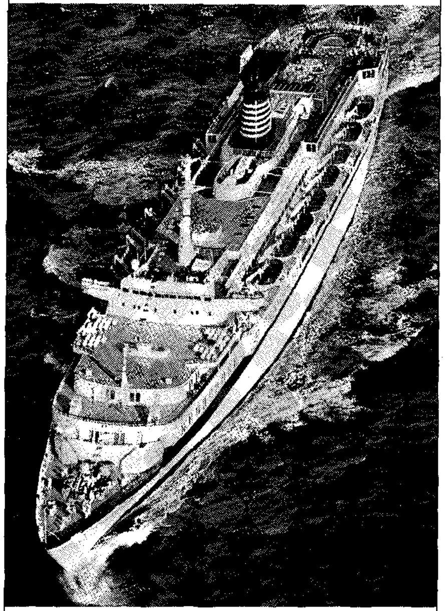

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SPORTS

B-Ball Begins—You don't need a degree in astrophysics to see that the Chicago Bulls' loss is the Knicks' gain. Michael Jordan's unexpected retirement removes what had come to be an almost mythical obstacle in the Knicks' path toward a championship. If ever there was a year, this is it. For the Nets, the tragic death of Drazen Petrovic last summer will certainly have a sobering effect, but it remains to be seen if the team has the depth to regroup. The Knicks open their home season against the Philadelphia 76ers on Nov. 9 at 7:30, and the Nets get started on Nov. 11, when they'll face the Indiana Pacers.

HOME TEAMS

Jets—Vs. the Miami Dolphins, Nov. 7 at 4.

Giants—Away until Nov. 14, when they'll face the Washington Redskins.

Rangers—Vs. the Vancouver Canucks, Nov. 3. . . . ¶ Vs. the Tampa Bay Lightning, Nov. 8. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Hartford Whalers, Nov. 6 at 7:10. . . . ¶ Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Nov. 9 at 7:40.

Devils—Away until Nov. 10, when they'll face the Islanders.

(The Jets and the Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111; the Knicks and the Rangers at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Ice Genie—Walt Disney's World on Ice presents an all-skating version of "Aladdin." (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Nov. 4 at 7:30; Nov. 5 at 10:30, 3:30, and 7:30; and Nov. 6-7 at 11, 3:30, and 7:30.)

Tumble Much?—The Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats & Magicians, a thirty-five-member troupe, perform comedy, gymnastics, juggling, and traditional Chinese dances. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. Nov. 6 at 1:30.)

Puppets, Puppets, Puppets—"The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin," a new marionette production, promises the tale "as it has never been told before." Hmm. (Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. 988-9093. Tuesdays through Fridays, except Nov. 3, at 10:30 and noon, and Saturdays at noon and 3.)

Deep Sea Diver—"Flight of the Aquanaut," a film about a marine biologist's exploration of a coral reef, is shown in a theatre that has an eight-story-high screen. Talk about a you-are-there experience. (Omni Theatre, Liberty Science Center, Liberty State Park, Jersey City. For information about schedules and transportation, call 1-201 200-1000.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

A Southern Education—Journalist Charlayne Hunter-Gault will read from her memoir "In My Place," about her childhood in the South and her experiences as the first black woman at the University of Georgia. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Nov. 3 at 6:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Pumped Up—Female weight lifters and bodybuilders will flex their collective muscles on Nov. 5 at 7:30. Each of the twenty-five participants—including Vicki Steenrod, nine-time powerlifter champion; Victoria Gay, an American Gladiator; and home-town favorite Laurie Fierstein—will demonstrate her prowess in a solo performance. For the finale, the women will combine to form a human sculpture. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. For more information, call 929-3832.)

Yonder Comes Tony—Bronx native Tony Curtis, who made his début at the 92nd Street Y's playhouse fifty-one years ago, will return to discuss his acting career, which includes "Some Like It Hot" and the epic "Spartacus." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 7 at 3.)

Beattiemania—Ann Beattie, whose books include "Picturing Will" and "The Burning House" and whose advice to beginning writers is "Don't tug at the seam, and it'll open gradually," will read from her new fiction. With Lawrence Joseph. (Universalist Church, 160 Central Park W., at 76th St. Nov. 8 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Foraging—Peruse the Brooklyn Botanic Ga[illegible]den for nuts, berries, cones, and pods, w[illegible] garden guide Alane Joynes, on Nov. 7 at [illegible]. Following the tour, at 2:30, the Brooklyn Youth Chorus will give a concert. (1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza. No tickets necessary.)

A to Z—Amos Oz, who writes about Israel, will read from his most recent novel, "Fima," a comedy of ideas about an intellectual in Jerusalem. With Ida Fink. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 8 at 8.)

More Readings—Nov. 3 at 7: Tony Hoagland, Elizabeth Spires, and Rosanna Warren will read from their own poetry. (Poetry Society of America, 15 Gramercy Park S. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Nov. 4 at 7: Jane Cooper and Stanley Kunitz, among others, will read from the poetry of George Herbert. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Sq. S., at Macdougal St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 7: Eileen Myles and Lynne Tillman, among others, will read from the poetry of David Rattray, who died last February. (Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 7: Caryl Phillips and Helen Garner will read from their own fiction. (New York University, Main Building, Room 703, 100 Washington Sq. E., at Waverly Pl. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 8 at 7: William T. Vollman will read from his new collection, "Butterfly Stories." With novelist Richard Grossman. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 7:30: Amy Clampitt and Donald Justice will read from their own poetry. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Talks—Nov. 3 at 6: Michael Kimmelman, Grace Mirabella, and others will ponder the question "What Is American Style?" (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd. St. No charge beyond museum contribution.) . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 7: Painter Liliana Porter will talk about her work. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53th St. No charge beyond museum contribution. Free tickets, which are required, are available at 6 at the museum's Edward John Noble Education Center.) . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 6:30: Laurie Anderson and Mike Kelley will talk about the latter's current show and about contemporary issues in modern art. (Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. Tickets at the door on the evening of the talk.) . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 6: Clement Greenberg will be interviewed by art cri[illegible] Hilton Kramer. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 8: Helen Suzman, author of a memoir about South Africa, will talk about that country's politics. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Walks & Tours—Nov. 6 at 2: A free tour of Central Park's Conservatory Garden and Harlem Meer. Meets at Fifth Ave. at 106th St. . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 11: The Caribbean flavors of Brooklyn: a tour of Nostrand Avenue. For more information, call 1-718 624-0890. . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 1: Big Onion Walking Tours will visit the battlefields and protest grounds of lower Manhattan. For more information, call 439-1090.

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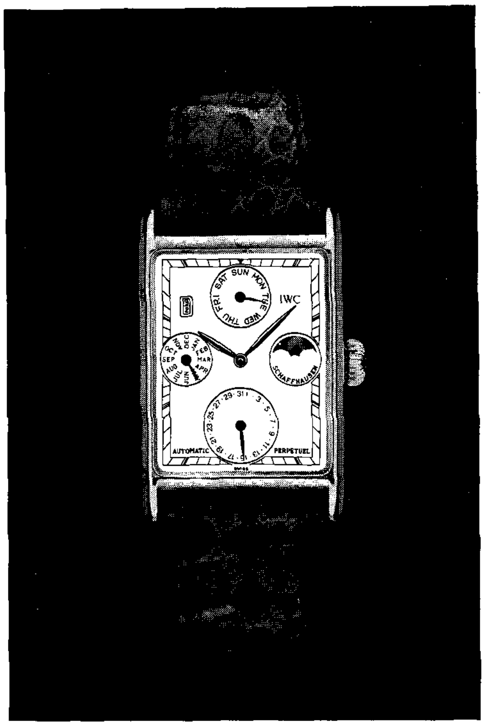

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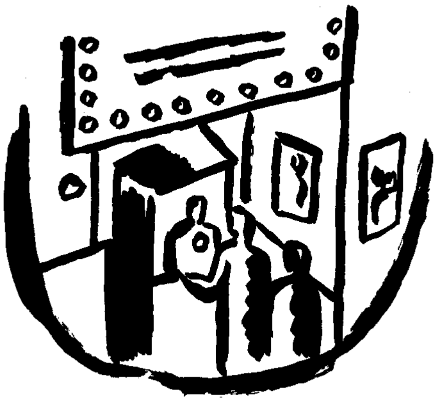

THE MOVIES

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7	8	9	3	4	5	6

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 43.

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Theatre 1: "Household Saints" (†).
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Theatre 5: "Into the West" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Wedding Banquet" (directed by Ang Lee).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"No More Mr. Nice Guy" (Detlev Buck; in German); and "The Tango Player" (1990, Roland Gräf; in German).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 4: "M. Butterfly" (David Cronenberg), with Jeremy Irons and John Lone. From Nov. 5: "The Harvest" (David Marconi).
Theatre 2: "Fearless" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Nov. 4: "Mr. Jones" (†). From Nov. 5: "RoboCop 3" (Fred Dekker).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Demolition Man" (Marco Brambilla), with Sylvester Stallone and Wesley Snipes.
Theatre 2: "A Bronx Tale" (Robert De Niro).
Theatre 3: "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1951, Elia Kazan), with Vivien Leigh, Marlon Brando, Karl Malden, and Kim Hunter.
Theatre 4: "Malice" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 6: "Dazed and Confused" (Richard Linklater).
Theatre 7: Through Nov. 4: "Rudy" (David Anspaugh), with Sean Astin. From Nov. 5: "Flesh and Bone" (Steve Kloves).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Sex & Zen" (Michael Mak; in Cantonese), with Lawrence Ng.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 3: "Gettysburg" (†).
Theatre 4: "Combination Platter" (Tony Chan; in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin).
Theatre 5: "Twenty Bucks" (Keva Rosenfeld).
Theatre 6: "Cool Runnings" (Jon Turteltaub).
Theatre 7: "Baraka" (Mark Magidson and Ron Fricke).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 4: "Mr. Wonderful" (Anthony Minghella), with Matt Dillon and Annabella Sciorra. From Nov. 5: "RoboCop 3" (Fred Dekker).
Theatre 2: Through Nov. 4: "Rudy" (David Anspaugh), with Sean Astin. From Nov. 5: "Flesh and Bone" (Steve Kloves).
Theatre 3: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).
Theatre 4: "Cool Runnings" (Jon Turteltaub).
Theatre 5: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 6: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Malice" (†).
Theatre 2: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 4: "Fatal Instinct" (Carl Reiner), with Armand Assante.

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 4: Theatre closed. From Nov. 5: "Flesh and Bone" (Steve Kloves).
Theatre 2: "Demolition Man" (Marco Brambilla), with Sylvester Stallone and Wesley Snipes.
Theatre 3: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Farewell My Concubine" (†).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).
Theatre 2: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Good Son" (Joseph Ruben), with Macaulay Culkin.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Baraka" (Mark Magidson and Ron Fricke).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 4: "Twenty Bucks" (Keva Rosenfeld). From Nov. 5: "A Home of Our Own" (Tony Bill).
Theatre 2: "Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"True Romance" (Tony Scott), with Christian Slater and Patricia Arquette.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (Woody Allen).
Theatre 2: "The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Short Cuts" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Demolition Man" (Marco Brambilla), with Sylvester Stallone and Wesley Snipes.
Theatre 2: "Flight of the Innocent" (Ca[illegible] Carlei, in Italian), with Manuel Colao.
Theatre 3: "Mr. Jones" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Nov. 4: "The Beverly Hillbillies" (Penelope Spheeris). From Nov. 5: "A Home of Our Own" (Tony Bill).
Theatre 5: Through Nov. 4: "M. Butterfly" (David Cronenberg), with Jeremy Irons and John Lone. From Nov. 5: "Look Who's Talking Now!" (Tom Ropelewski).
Theatre 6: "Fatal Instinct" (Carl Reiner), with Armand Assante, Sherilyn Fenn, Kate Nelligan, and Sean Young.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 2: Through Nov. 4: "Rudy" (David Anspaugh), with Sean Astin. From Nov. 5: "RoboCop 3" (Fred Dekker).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"A Bronx Tale" (Robert De Niro).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 4: Theatre closed. From Nov. 5: "Flesh and Bone" (Steve Kloves).
Theatre 2: "Malice" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Combination Platter" (Tony Chan; in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Fearless" (†).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Fatal Instinct" (Carl Reiner), with Armand Assante.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).
Theatre 2: "Malice" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 4: "Gettysburg" (†). From Nov. 5: "Flesh and Bone" (Steve Kloves).
Theatre 2: Through Nov. 4: Theatre closed. From Nov. 5: "Look Who's Talking Now!" (Tom Ropelewski).
Theatre 3: "A Bronx Tale" (Robert De Niro).
Theatre 4: Through Nov. 4: "Rudy" (David Anspaugh), with Sean Astin. From Nov. 5: "RoboCop 3" (Fred Dekker).
Theatre 5: "The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese).
Theatre 6: "Demolition Man" (Marco Brambilla).
Theatre 7: "Cool Runnings" (Jon Turteltaub).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 2: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "The War Room" (†).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: Through Nov. 4: "It's All True: Based on an Unfinished Film by Orson Welles" (†). From Nov. 5: "La Strada" (1954, directed by Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Anthony Quinn, Richard Basehart, and Giulietta Masina.

MICHAEL TROSSMAN

Opening November 5, Sarita Choudhury and Naveen Andrews in "Wild West."

"The [illegible] gave her a diamond ring, her hug took my breath away."

I'll always remember that face. The smile bordering on a tear. Silence as powerful as music. Eyes as lively as the diamond I nervously slipped on her finger. And now that we have come so far together, perhaps now is the moment to celebrate that love, once again, with a diamond as exceptional as our love.

Exceptional women. Exceptional diamond.

An exceptional diamond of two [illegible] her own one. If you are considering an important diamond gift [illegible] a brilliantly cut 2.04-carat center stone, simply call for [illegible] to a diamond's quality and value [illegible] the name of your local expert diamond jeweler. 1-80[illegible]

De Beers

A diamond is forever

THE MOVIES—*Cont'd*

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "True Romance" (Tony Scott).

Theatre 2: "Fatal Instinct" (Carl Reiner).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 4: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones. From Nov. 5: "A Home of Our Own" (Tony Bill).

Theatre 2: "Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 4: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; in Spanish). From Nov. 5: "Wild West" (David Attwood).

Theatre 2: "Return of the Living Dead 3" (Brian Yuzna).

Theatre 3: "Black Cat" (Stephen Shin), with Jade Leung.

Theatre 4: Through Nov. 4: "The Ballad of Little Jo" (Maggie Greenwald), with Suzy Amis. From Nov. 5: "The Silent Touch" (Krzysztof Zanussi).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "Demolition Man" (Marco Brambilla).

Theatre 2: "A Bronx Tale" (Robert De Niro).

Theatre 3: "Demolition Man."

Theatre 4: "Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).

Theatre 5: "Malice" (†).

Theatre 6: "Dazed and Confused" (Richard Linklater).

Theatre 7: "Fatal Instinct" (Carl Reiner), with Armand Assante.

Theatre 8: "Fearless" (†).

Theatre 9: "Flight of the Innocent" (Carlo Carlei, in Italian), with Manuel Colao.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.

Theatre 2: "The Beverly Hillbillies" (Penelope Spheeris).

Theatre 3: "The Good Son" (Joseph Ruben), with Macaulay Culkin.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"The Joy Luck Club" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Combination Platter" (Tony Chan; in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin).

Theatre 2: "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).

Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg).

Theatre 4: "Gettysburg" (†).

Theatre 5: "Household Saints" (†).

Theatre 6: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (Woody Allen).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"Dazed and Confused" (Richard Linklater).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"It's All True: Based on an Unfinished Film by Orson Welles" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 4: "Twenty Bucks" (Keva Rosenfeld). From Nov. 5: "Wild West" (David Attwood).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)

"Wicked City," a Japanese animated film.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

Through Nov. 4: Theatre closed.

From Nov. 5: "The Remains of the Day" (James Ivory).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Fearless" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

Through Nov. 4: "Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).

From Nov. 5: "A Home of Our Own" (Tony Bill).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).

Theatre 2: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).

Theatre 4: "Ruby in Paradise" (†).

Theatre 5: "La Chasse aux Papillons" (Otar Iosseliani; in French).

Theatre 6: "Into the West" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Fatal Instinct" (Carl Reiner), with Armand Assante.

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 4: Theatre closed. From Nov. 5: "Flesh and Bone" (Steve Kloves).

Theatre 2: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).

Theatre 3: "Malice" (†).

Theatre 4: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).

Theatre 5: "A Bronx Tale" (Robert De Niro), with De Niro and Chazz Palminteri.

Theatre 6: "Demolition Man" (Marco Brambilla), with Sylvester Stallone and Wesley Snipes.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "The Good Son" (Joseph Ruben), with Macaulay Culkin.

Theatre 2: "Mr. Jones" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Cool Runnings" (Jon Turteltaub).

Theatre 2: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Demolition Man" (directed by Marco Brambilla), with Sylvester Stallone and Wesley Snipes.

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 4: "Rudy" (David Anspaugh), with Sean Astin. From Nov. 5: "The Harvest" (David Marconi).

Theatre 3: Through Nov. 4: "Return of the Living Dead 3" (Brian Yuzna). From Nov. 5: "Look Who's Talking Now!" (Tom Ropelewski).

Theatre 4: "The Good Son" (Joseph Ruben).

Theatre 5: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.

Theatre 6: "Fatal Instinct" (Carl Reiner).

Theatre 7: "A Bronx Tale" (Robert De Niro).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 4: "Cool Runnings" (Jon Turteltaub). From Nov. 5: "RoboCop 3" (Fred Dekker).

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 4: "The Beverly Hillbillies" (Penelope Spheeris). From Nov. 5: "RoboCop 3."

Theatre 3: "The Program" (David S. Ward).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

Through Nov. 4: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington).

From Nov. 5: "Flesh and Bone" (Steve Kloves).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Malice" (†).

Theatre 2: "Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Through Nov. 7: "La Strada" (1954, directed by Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Anthony Quinn, Richard Basehart, and Giulietta Masina.

Nov. 8-9: "Variety Lights" (1949, Federico Fellini and Alberto Lattuada; in Italian).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

Through Nov. 6: "The Sound of Music" (1965, Robert Wise), with Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer. On Nov. 4, at 7:45, Mr. Wise and author Julia Antopol Hirsch will talk about the book "The Sound of Music: Making of America's Favorite Movie."

From Nov. 7: "That Hamilton Woman!" (1941, Alexander Korda) and "21 Days Together" (1937, Basil Dean), both with Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier.

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)

Through Nov. 4: "Sweet Smell of Success" (1957, Alexander Mackendrick), with Burt Lancaster and Tony Curtis; and "Elmer Gantry" (†).

Nov. 5-7: "1900" (1977, Bernardo Bertolucci), with Robert De Niro.

From Nov. 8: To be announced.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Nov. 3: "Chinatown" (1974, Roman Polanski), with Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and John Huston; and "Cul-de-Sac" (1966, Polanski), with Donald Pleasence and Françoise Dorléac.

Nov. 4: "Even Dwarfs Started Small" (1970, Werner Herzog; in German); and "Fitzcarraldo" (1982, Herzog; in German), with Klaus Kinski and Claudia Cardinale.

Nov. 5-6: "The Lady from Shanghai" (1948, Orson Welles), with Rita Hayworth, Welles, and Everett Sloane; and "Gilda" (1946, Charles Vidor), with Hayworth and Glenn Ford.

Nov. 7: "Band of Outsiders" (1964, Jean-Luc Godard; in French); and "Breathless" (1959, Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo.

Nov. 8: "The Last Metro" (†) and "Love on the Run" (†).

Nov. 9: "Hi, Mom!" (†); and "The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight" (1971, James Goldstone).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Nov [illegible] at 2:30 and Nov. 7 at 5: "Queen Kelly (1929, directed by Erich von Stroheim; silent), with Gloria Swanson. . . . ¶ Nov. 4 at 3 and 6: "Eighth Day Theatre" (1992, Johanna Helander and Bo Persson; in Swedish), a documentary. . . . ¶ Nov. 6 at 6: "Harakiri" (1919, Fritz Lang; a silent film). . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 2:30 and Nov. 6 at 5: "Traviata 53" (1953, Vittorio Cottafavi; in Italian). . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 3: "Tightrope" (1984, Richard Tuggle), with Clint Eastwood. . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 6 and Nov. 6 at 2: "Woman Always Pays" (1910, Urban Gad; a Danish silent film) and "Looping the Loop" (1928, Arthur Robinson; a German silent film). . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 6: "White Hunter, Black Heart" (1990, Eastwood), with Eastwood. . . . ¶ Nov. 6 at 2:30: "Pale Rider" (1985, Eastwood), with Eastwood. . . . ¶ Nov. 6 at 5: "Unforgiven" (1992, Eastwood), with Eastwood, Gene Hackman, Morgan Freeman, and Richard Harris. . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 2 and Nov. 8 at 2:30: "Upstage" (1926, Monta Bell; a silent film); and "A Day in the Country" (1937, Jean Renoir; in French). . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 2:30: "Heartbreak Ridge" (1986, Eastwood), with Eastwood. . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 5: "Bronco Billy" (†). . . . ¶ Nov. 8 at 3: "The Outlaw Josey Wales" (1976, Eastwood), with Eastwood. . . . ¶ Nov. 8 at 6: "Coeur de Lilas" (1931, Anatole Litvak; in French); and "La Dame d'Onze Heures" (1947, Jean Devaivre; in French). . . . ¶ Nov. 8 at 6:30: "Smoke" (1993, Mark d'Auria). . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 2:30: "Mehboob's Anthology" (1992). . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 6: "The Puppetmaster" (1993, Hou Hsiao-Hsien; in Chinese, Japanese, and Taiwanese).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Nov. 3 at 2 and 6: "Nosferatu, the Vampyre" (†). . . . ¶ Nov. 3 at 4 and 8: "Ganja and Hess" (1973, Bill Gunn). . . . ¶ Nov. 4 at 2 and 6: "The Fearless Vampire Killers" (1967, Roman Polanski). . . . ¶ Nov. 4 at 4 and 8: "Lifeforce" (†). . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 2 and 6:45, Nov. 6-7 at 6, and Nov. 9 at 8: "The Northerners" (1992, Alex van Warmerdam). . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 4:15 and 9: "Going Home" (1993, Hans Hylkama). . . . ¶ Nov. 6-7 at 2: "The Penknife" (1992, Ben Sombagoart). . . . ¶ Nov. 6 at 3:45 and 8:15: "Ava & Gabriel" (1990, Felix de Rooy). . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 4 and Nov. 8 at 2: "Beck" (1992, Jacob Bijl). . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 8:15 and Nov. 8 at 4: "The Three Best Things" (1992, Ger Poppelaars). . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 2 and 6: "Above the Mountains" (1992, Digna Sinke). . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 4: "Vigor" (1990, Frouke Fokkema).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077) A retrospective program of the museum's first five years: Nov. 6 at 2: "King of Kings" (1927, Cecil B. De Mille; silent). . . . ¶ Nov. 6 at 5: "Madam Satan" (†). . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 2: "The Errand Boy" (1962, Jerry Lewis), with Lewis. . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 5: "The Ladies Man" (1961, Lewis), with Lewis.

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—"The Documentary Films of Frederick Wiseman." Nov. 4 at 5:30 and Nov. 6 at 2: "Basic Training" (†). . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 6 and Nov. 7 at 2: "Blind" (1987).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Nov. 3 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "La Discrète" (1990, Christian Vincent; in French), with Fabrice Luchini and Maurice Garrel.

MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Combination Platter—The story of an illegal immigrant from Hong Kong who works in a Chinese restaurant in Queens and who tries to get a green card by looking for an American wife. Directed by Tony Chan. In English, Cantonese, and Mandarin. Opening November 3.

Flesh and Bone—A drama, set in West Texas, about a vending-machine supplier (Dennis Quaid) who falls in love with a young woman (Meg Ryan) and then discovers that years earlier his father (James Caan) murdered her family. Directed by Steve Kloves. Opening November 5.

The Harvest—A thriller about a washed-up screenwriter (Miguel Ferrer) who travels to Mexico to investigate a murder he is trying to write about. Directed by David Marconi. Opening November 5.

A Home of Our Own—A widow (Kathy Bates), recently fired from her job in Los Angeles, loads her six kids in their old car and lights out for the territory. Directed by Tony Bill. Opening November 5.

Look Who's Talking Now!—John Travolta and Kirstie Alley's kids are talking on their own, so this time it's the dogs who talk: a mutt with Danny DeVito's voice and a poodle with Diane Keaton's. Directed by Tom Ropelewski. Opening November 5.

Opening November 5, Kathy Bates and six kids in "A Home of Our Own."

CLARE MACKIE

The Remains of the Day—An English butler (Anthony Hopkins) reflects on his years of service to his employer (James Fox) and his failure to express his love to a co-worker (Emma Thompson). Written by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, based on the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. Directed by James Ivory. Opening November 5.

oboCop 3—Robert Burke is the supercop out to save old Detroit. With Nancy Allen and Rip Torn. Directed by Fred Dekker. Opening November 5.

The Silent Touch—A retired composer (Max von Sydow) is encouraged by a young musicologist (Lothaire Bluteau) to write again. With Sarah Miles as the composer's wife and Sofie Gråbøl as his lover. Directed by Krzysztof Zanussi. Opening November 5.

The Tango Player—In East Germany in 1968, a historian (Michael Gwisdeck) is released from prison after serving a two-year sentence for playing the piano in an underground cabaret. Directed by Roland Gräf. In German. Opening November 3.

The War Room—A documentary about the 1992 Democratic Presidential campaign, focussing on the work of James Carville (the Clinton campaign strategist) and George Stephanopoulos (the communications director). Directed by D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening November 3.

Wild West—A comedy, set in London's "Little India," about a Pakistani man and his country-music band, the Honky Tonk Cowboys. With Sarita Choudhury and Naveen Andrews. Directed by David Attwood. Opening November 5.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Farewell My Concubine—Chen Kaige's film is a big, eventful historical soap opera of the "Doctor Zhivago" school—the sort of drama that uses the unsettled emotional lives of a handful of characters to portray the human cost of war and of constant political upheaval. The movie follows a pair of male Beijing Opera performers, Cheng Dieyi (Leslie Cheung) and Duan Xiaolou (Zhang Fengyi), from their school days, in the nineteen-twenties and early thirties, to their farewell performance together, in 1977. Chen keeps the action charging forward breathlessly, for more than two and a half hours, and at a certain point you begin to realize that the obvious theatre-versus-life ironies are only a small part of what the movie is about. The real subject is whether it's possible, in times that demand perpetual revolutions in values, to remain true to anyone or anything: an art, an ideal, a friend, a wife, oneself. In Mandarin.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/11/93.) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Fearless—The central event in Peter Weir's new movie is the crash of a commercial airliner. Weir knows a metaphor for the fragility of modern man's existence when he sees one, and he seizes on this calamity as if it were something that he had been searching for all his life: an ideal vehicle for the sort of apocalyptic imagery and metaphysical speculation that dominated his early films, like "Picnic at Hanging Rock" (1975) and "The Last Wave" (1977). In terms of imagery and rhythm, this is a stunning piece of filmmaking; it's also a shamelessly florid exercise in therapeutic uplift. Essentially, Weir hijacks a fairly straightforward story about a couple of crash survivors (played by Jeff Bridges and Rosie Perez) and takes it to the Twilight Zone.—T.R. (10/25/93) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Tower East, Chelsea Cinemas, and Columbus Circle.)

Gettysburg—Michael Shaara's thoughtful, surprisingly supple novel ("The Killer Angels") becomes something completely different: a Civil War buff's dream. The writer-director, Ronald F. Maxwell, strains to be rousing. His four-hour-and-eight-minute spectacle—featuring five thousand reënactors doing Pickett's Charge on the actual site—is overscored and often overacted. It needlessly reminds audiences of the battle's momentousness. Still, this clunky movie does have stirring passages (especially the defense of Little Round Top).—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Orpheum VII; through Nov. 4.)

Household Saints—Vincent D'Onofrio confirms his acting mettle, this time as a flirtatious butcher who wins the hand of a plain, innocent girl (Tracey Ullman) in a pinochle game, and stuns everybody by going ahead and marrying her. D'Onofrio doesn't overdo the man's confidence and warmth or his conventional, pampered streak. He's the best reason to see Nancy Savoca's catastrophically shaky comedy-drama about Italian-American-Catholic urban folkways from the forties to the sixties, which culminates in D'Onofrio's daughter's willing herself into sainthood. By then the audience has ceased trying to figure out whether to guffaw, sob, or genuflect. With Lili Taylor as D'Onofrio's daughter and Judith Malina as his mother. Richard Guay and Savoca co-wrote the adaptation of Francine Prose's novel.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Into the West—The adventures of two Irish boys, Ossie (Ciaran Fitzgerald) and Tito (Ruaidhri Conroy), and a white horse, which transports them from a depressing Dublin housing project all the way to the island's wild western shore. The screenplay, by Jim Sheridan, is based on motifs from Celtic mythology: Ossie's name refers to the legendary poet-warrior Ossian; the horse's name is Tir na nOg, which means Land of Eternal Youth (the Celtic version of Paradise); and in the old tales the waves of the Atlantic, where this movie reaches its climax, were sometimes called "white horses." Sheridan and the director, Mike Newell, keep the story moving along nimbly and achieve a winning blend of comedy and lyricism. The filmmakers don't have to insist on the magical properties

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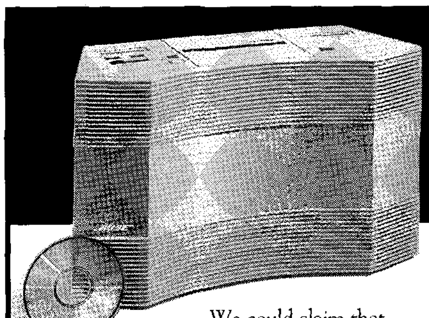

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of their story, because the horse—which evokes memories of the wondrous creature in Albert Lamorisse's great 1953 children's film, "White Mane"—supplies all the magic the movie needs. —T.R. (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

IT'S ALL TRUE: BASED ON AN UNFINISHED FILM BY ORSON WELLES—In 1942, Orson Welles was sent to Rio to make a film that would strengthen wartime relations between the United States and Latin America. In the event, it resulted only in irreparable damage to his career. Long believed lost, the movie has now been partly reconstructed from footage found in 1985, and is wrapped in a documentary that explains its unlikely beginnings and untimely end. The film was to be a hybrid of three stories: a documentary about the Rio carnival, the fable of a boy and a bull, and the dramatized account of a protest, in which four Brazilian fishermen sailed along the coast to Rio to demand justice from the President. This last section was plainly the strongest, and—thanks to the unstinting efforts of Richard Wilson, Bill Krohn, and Myron Meisel—can now be shown as a continuous story, albeit without Welles's planned narration. It would never have been one of his major works, but the swiftness and urgency with which the tale is told, and the potent composition of even the most simple scenes, reveal the touch of the master.—A.L. (11/1/93) (57th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ Film Forum; through Nov. 4.)

THE JOY LUCK CLUB—Amy Tan's 1989 novel is actually a collection of sixteen linked short stories about Chinese immigrant mothers trying to impart their knowledge of life to their Americanized daughters. Unfortunately, Tan and Ronald Bass ("Rain Man"), who wrote the movie, have attempted to cram all her mini-narratives into the script, diminishing instead of enlarging them. The contemporary scenes of marital discord and generational strife seem pat or trite, while the flashbacks to the mothers' woeful lives in China seem overblown or empty and portentous. Wayne Wang's limp direction is only part of the problem. Tan and Bass rely so heavily on voice-over narration that it sponges up the possibilities for genuine drama and emotion. By the end, the filmmakers just about beg for tears.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

MALICE—Andy Safian (Bill Pullman) married his favorite student, Tracy (Nicole Kidman), and they now live peacefully in a quiet college town—so quiet that you can hear rape and murder just waiting round the corner. After the ghastly deeds are done, Andy becomes a suspect, but, worse than that, he opens his doors to a big bad lodger—Jed Hill (Alec Baldwin), surgeon and stud. The director, Harold Becker, working from a script by Aaron Sorkin and Scott Frank, piles on the twists, and his photographer, Gordon Willis, wraps the action in immaculately tailored shadows, but they can't disguise its essential silliness. Thankfully, Alec Baldwin refuses to give up, and in the second half he grabs the movie and turns it into high hokum.—A.L. (10/18/93) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

MR. JONES—The last time Richard Gere teamed up with the British director Mike Figgis, it went like a dream, albeit a scary one: they made the gripping "Internal Affairs," with Gere looking like a fetish object in his cop uniform. Now the magic is gone; he plays Mr. Jones—the man from nowhere, with his mind out of whack. He does crazy things—balancing on a roof beam, pushing aside a symphony conductor in the middle of a concert and trying to lead the orchestra himself—and is handed over for treatment to a psychiatrist (Lena Olin). You can feel a love affair coming, but it takes a long time, and then passes by; the rest of the movie is one long brood.—A.L. (First & 62nd Cinemas, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex; through Nov. 4.)

Ruby in Paradise—Ruby Lee Gissing (Ashley Judd) flees to Florida in search of a new life and finds it in Panama City Beach. There she sells T-shirts and trinkets, and yields to the advances of the loathsome Ricky (Bentley Mitchum) and the well-read Mike (Todd Field). Judd is a fine blend of pushy and graceful, but Victor Nuñez's script and direction leave her beached.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Short Cuts—Robert Altman uses nine short stories by Raymond Carver as the raw material for a latter-day "Nashville," set in Southern California. (One story line—by far the weakest—is the invention of Altman and his co-screenwriter, Frank Barhydt.) Most of the stories in the three-hour-and-seven-minute movie are about misunderstandings—often outright hostilities—between men and women, and the juxtaposition of all these poisonous domestic relationships has the effect of turning Carver's closely observed, scrupulously specific small dramas into a big, obvious generalization about men's brutality and women's capacity for endurance. Despite Altman's exquisite control of pace, the movie seems thin and insubstantial. —T.R. (9/27/93) (Cinema I, and Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas—This full-length animated movie was shot in stop motion, with all the febrile, twittery fascination that the medium exerts; it has a magic-toyshop feeling, with unexpected objects stuttering into life. Directed by Henry Selick, it was devised and co-produced by Tim Burton, who leaves a trail of his familiar obsessions: graveyard humor, whirling snow, a velvety darkness. But the atmosphere is too rich for the pallid plot: Jack Skellington, the bony master of ceremonies in Halloweentown, discovers the spirit of Christmas and tries to import it into his ghoulish world. The clash of styles—demonic vs. cute—pays off only toward the end; for all the witty, festering details (look out for the cat that howls like a siren when you crank its tail), the film is strangely static. Danny Elfman's score is lush and shocking but much too good for his lyrics. Children may find it too black and baffling; adults with nervous dispositions should be nicely freaked out.—A.L. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

The War Room—A documentary, directed by D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Film Forum.)

REVIVALS

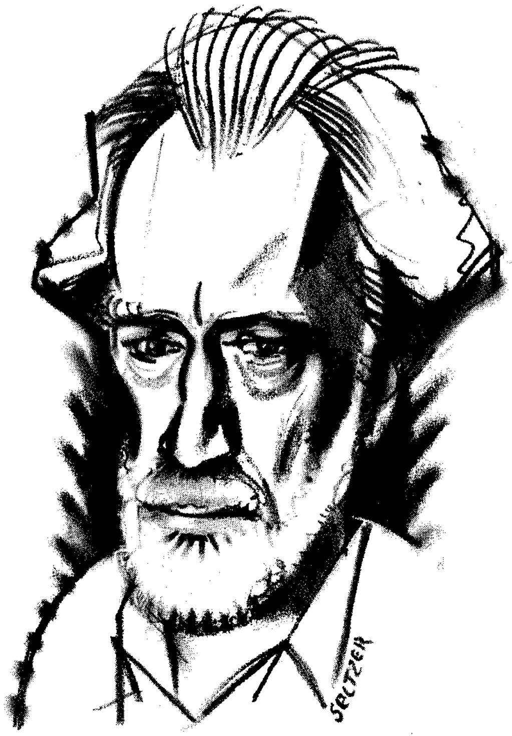
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow.)

Basic Training (1971)—This wrenching chronicle of how the U.S. Army militarized young men in the Vietnam era is one of Frederick Wiseman's most dramatically cohesive and visually arresting documentaries. The officers and drill instructors at Fort Knox, Kentucky, link war-readiness with sports, phallic prowess, and manhood itself. Wiseman doesn't buy this red-blooded-American rhetoric—he shows that it's a way for the Army to arouse the inductees' appetites for honor, service, and courage. The movie isn't dehumanized; it's about dehumanization. The sequence in which a suicidal recruit seeks counsel from a homiletic chaplain is as piercing as any in the Wiseman canon.—M.S. (Museum of Television and Radio; Nov. 4 and 6.)

Bronco Billy (1980)—An amiable change of pace for Clint Eastwood, but not much of a movie. Although he does a sweet-tempered turn as Bronco Billy, a former shoe salesman who runs a contemporary Wild West show, as a director he never achieves the airy tone and momentum that might have made the rest of the whimsy work. The plot involves a daft Eastern rich girl (Sondra Locke), the victim of an inheritance swindle, who joins Bronco's show on the rebound. The movie is freakily funny only when someone denigrates the cowboy ethic and Eastwood becomes the Man with No Patience.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 7.)

Elmer Gantry (1960)—Burt Lancaster and Jean Simmons as Bible Belt evangelists in the twenties, in a loud, striking, big-scale melodrama based on the Sinclair Lewis novel about con artists, adapted and directed by Richard Brooks. The movie cheats on the issues and it's overloaded with gigantic sets, enormous crowds, fires, riots, and human stampedes. But it's coarsely compelling and—though exhausting—never boring. When Lancaster plays a kinetic, broadly exaggerated character like the lecher Gantry, you can't take your eyes off him, and Simmons is one of the most quietly commanding actresses Hollywood has ever trashed. With Shirley Jones as Lulu Bains, Edward Andrews as George Babbitt, and Arthur Kennedy, Dean Jagger, Patti Page, John McIntire, Rex Ingram, Hugh Marlowe, and Philip Ober.—P.K. (Thalia; through Nov. 4.)

Hi, Mom! (1970)—Robert De Niro is at his most spontaneous in this amazing, free-wheeling comedy, written and directed by Brian De Palma, from a story he concocted with his young producer, Charles Hirsch. It was made in a cabaret style, taking on one societal target after another. De Palma uses a lot of camera gags in this film—he keeps you conscious of the film medium by playing Buster Keaton-like games with it. De Niro is a Vietnam vet who's trying to make out with girls. At first, he wants to shoot Peep Art films. Next, he joins a mostly black theatre-of-cruelty-and-revolt troupe that stages an audience-participation play—"Be Black, Baby." The black actors appear in whiteface and they daub black paint on the faces of the white liberals who attend, telling them that they are going to experience what it means to be black. Then the actors proceed to beat them and rob and rape them. This sequence becomes rather overpowering; conceptually it's satire, but it's too wild and chaotic to be very funny. When the actors become bored with theatrical approaches to revolution, they become urban guerrillas, and our hero gets closer to his dream of total involvement by setting bombs. The cast includes Jennifer Salt, Allen Garfield, Lara Parker, Gerrit Graham, and Ruth Alda.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Nov. 9.)



Opening November 5, Max von Sydow in "The Silent Touch."

ISADORE SELTZER

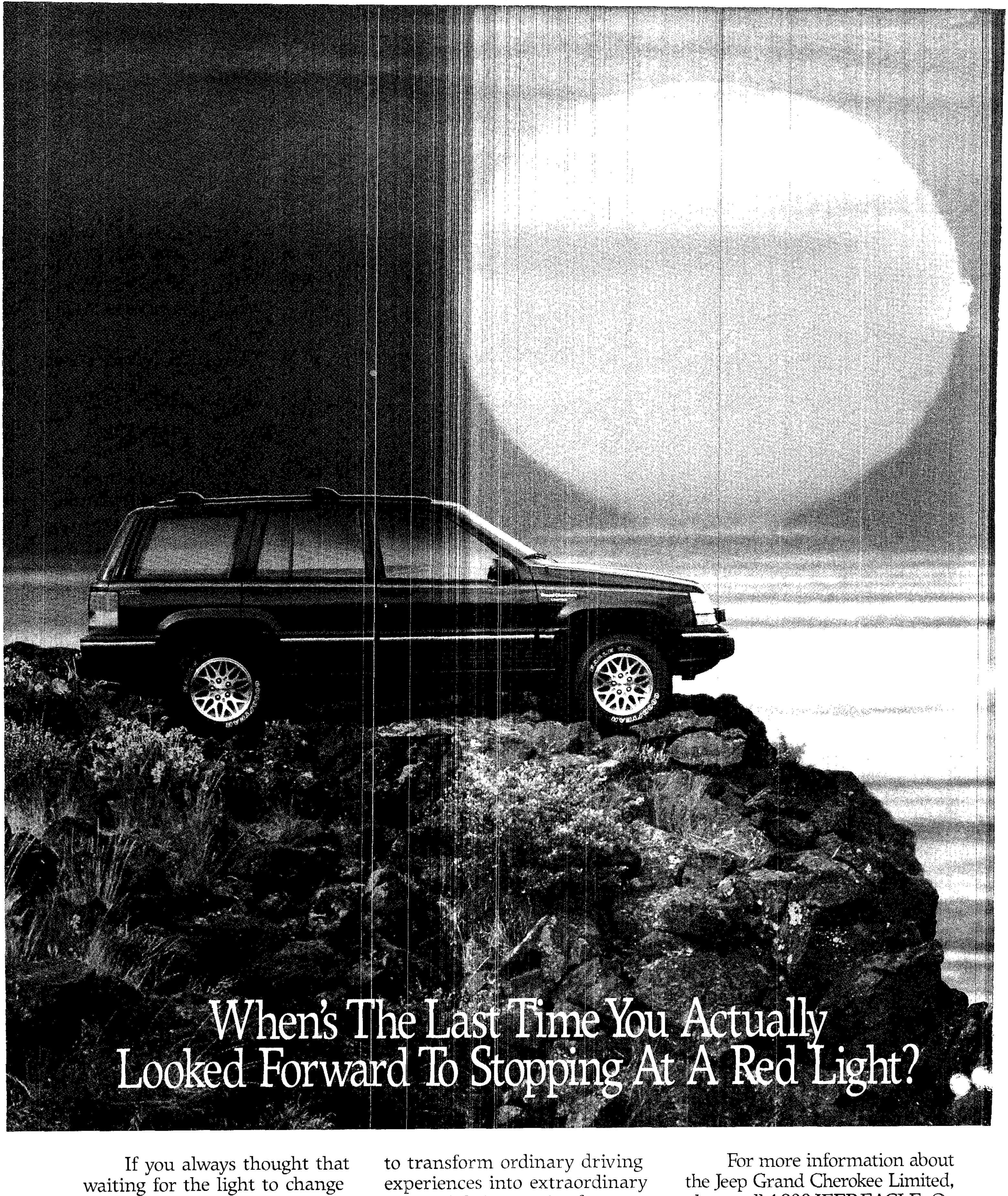
The Last Metro (1981)—François Truffaut's gratuitous apologia for Parisians who continued to ply theatre arts under Nazi rule. Gérard Depardieu plays an anti-Fascist actor from the Grand Guignol recruited to be the leading man in a troupe run by its leading lady, Catherine Deneuve—who is hiding her Jewish husband-director (Heinz Bennent) in the company's basement. When a powerful critic and Nazi collaborator visits the stage, Depardieu stumbles backward like a gorilla rather than shake the man's hand, causing the critic to remark, "He'd be perfect as the Hairy Ape!" It's the one completely unexpected moment in this thin tribute to the show-must-go-on spirit. Script by Truffaut, Suzanne Schiffman, and Jean-Claude Grumberg. In French.—M.S. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Nov. 8.)

Lifeforce (1985)—Colin Wilson's novel was called "The Space Vampires"; this ludicrous, enervated movie version should have been called "The Energy Vampires." The voluptuous Mathilda May plays an intergalactic queen bat whose minions take human form and drain victims of their life force by French-kissing them. Steve Railsback is an astronaut smitten with her. Tobe Hooper directed; script by Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Nov. 4.)

Love on the Run (1979)—François Truffaut compiles snippets from the previous four films about his alter ego, Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre Léaud), and ties them together with the flimsiest excuse for a plot. The rebellious child of "The 400 Blows" has become a spoiled adult, practicing Gallic charm on pretty ladies who trot out explanations for his bad behavior: he acts irresponsibly to pay the world back for an unhappy youth; since he never had a loving mother, he wants his wife to be mother, wet nurse, and mistress. Doinel's autobiographical novel-within-the-film is titled "Love and Other Troubles." The art-versus-life theme may give graduate students something to ponder; otherwise, the movie is a piece of narcissism posing as a valentine. In French.—M.S. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Nov. 8.)

Madame Satan (1930)—A hodgepodge by Cecil B. De Mille, culminating in an extravagant masked ball, costumed by Adrian, aboard an enormous dirigible. The party entertainment is an electrical ballet; the dancers are dressed with such motifs as sparkplugs and lightning streaks. God is angered, of course, and the festivities are interrupted by a real bolt of lightning. Some of the passengers are saved by their parachutes; the parachuteless hero, Reginald Denny, jumps to safety in the Central Park Reservoir—a stunt that the movies have never repeated. Lillian Roth, buxom and dimpled before she boozed and repented and told all ("I'll Cry Tomorrow"), is the wildly energetic showgirl Trixie; Kay Johnson is the heroine—the wife who disguises herself as Madame Satan in order to win her husband back. Also with Roland Young and Marthe Sleeper. You have to wait so long for the dirigible climax that you may be too exhausted to enjoy its lunacy. Written by Jeanie Macpherson.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Nov. 6.)

Nosferatu, the Vampyre (1979)—Werner Herzog's crude, wobbly remake of the Murnau classic at least boasts Klaus Kinski's flamboyant Dracula. His craggy bald skull registers as a crown, his skin is chalk, his eyes are darkly ringed, and his mandarin-length nails cast spidery shadows. He sports a caftan and a round Slavic hat instead of a flapping cape; at first glance he could be a spectral cocktail hostess or a ghoulish priest. But he's both virile and desperate. When he sees a human wound, he avidly requests a suck. "It's the oldest remedy in the world," he tells an astonished visitor. With the gorgeous Isabelle Adjani as Lucy Harker. In German.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Nov. 3.)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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

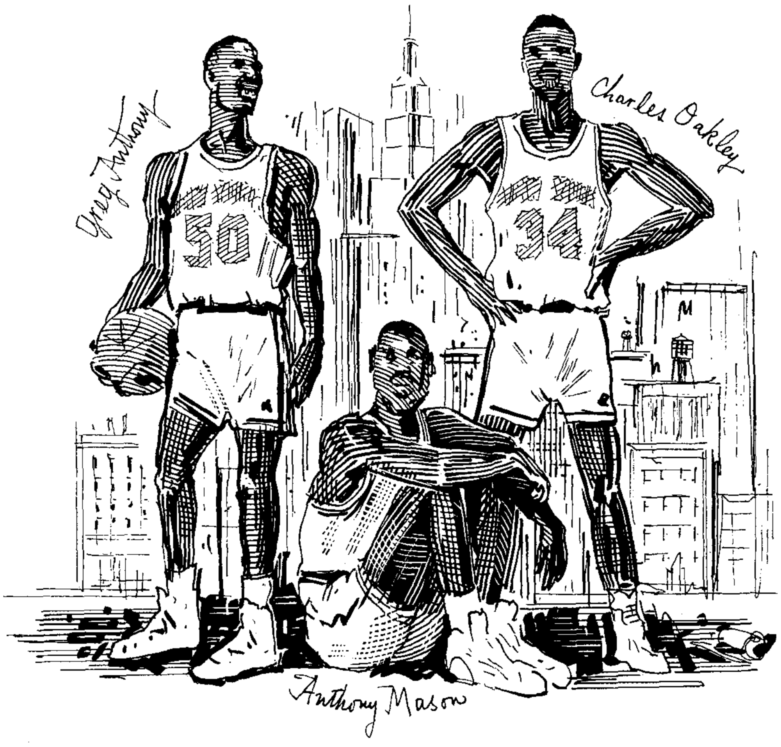
THIS CITY'S GAME

"THE court looks too small," a fan was heard to say the other night, staring down at the shiny wooden basketball floor of Madison Square Garden, where the New York Knickerbockers were loosening up for a pre-season contest with the San Antonio Spurs. Indeed, with a near-capacity crowd trying to shake off the late-October chill and cozy up to courtside, and with the entire Knick squad out on the floor in their bright orange-and-blue warmups, raining practice jumpers from rafter to rim, there appeared hardly room down there for a tight, slow dance, never mind a flat-out, hard-driving professional basketball game. While the impression clearly had to do with the size of these Knicks—bruising behemoths like Patrick Ewing, Charles Oakley, and Anthony Mason—it also seemed to reflect just how large the team, whose regular season opens later this week in Boston, now looms in the minds and hearts of New Yorkers.

Ours has long been a basketball city, but in recent years, with the electrifying pro game capturing the imagination of more and more of the twenty-something crowd; with increasing numbers of women drawn to a sport they, too, might have played in high school; and with the Knicks consistently winning—New Yorkers do not suffer losers, period—the game at times appears to have taken over the city, not only its small talk but also that large part of its consciousness reserved for anxieties. Somehow, as all New York sports fans understand, the city's deepest wants and woes (economic, racial, political) can suddenly get tied up with those of a team. It happened, or felt like it was happening, last spring, during Game Five of the Knicks' epic playoff battle against the Chicago Bulls—the packed, stunned Garden, and what we recall as a town of taverngoers, their heads upturned together toward the TV above the bar, sharing the sheer frustration as Knick forward Charles Smith went up two, three, and four times to the hoop with the ball to invent, it appeared, yet another way of not getting it home before the buzzer sounded.

There's a special feel to a Knick game at the Garden. It's a downtown-theatre night of sport, drawing a cross-section of New Yorkers which, perhaps more than any other assemblage at a major city event, represents Mayor Dinkins' oft invoked "gorgeous mosaic": the longtime, through-thick-and-thin (through Walt Frazier and Harthorne Wingo) blue-collar Knick fans; the bands of area playground stars wandering down from the upper seats, past clusters of Hasidic hoops mavens, to hug the railings at court level; the wrinkle-suited, unnecktied white-collar types; the women, unescorted, talking game strategy over peanuts; and, right next to the team benches and scoring tables, sitting elbows-to-knees on folding chairs, the likes of Spike Lee and Bill Murray and John McEnroe, sharing the privilege—à la the society women at ringside waiting to have their white evening gowns splashed with boxers' blood—of receiving a lunging Doc Rivers or John Starks in their laps.

"You've got the minorities and the majorities," the third-year point guard Greg Anthony told us a few days before the Knicks-Spurs game, in the locker room of the team's newly refurbished training facility, on the

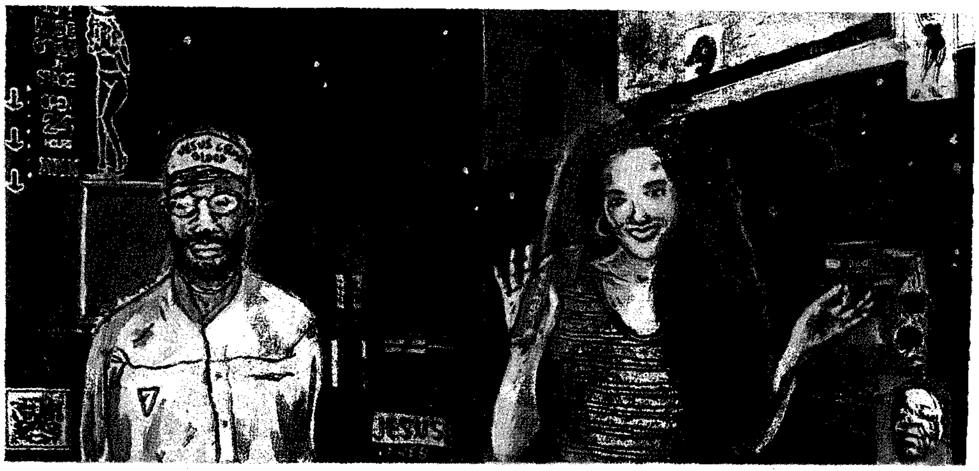


ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELLIOTT BANFIELD

THE VIEW FROM THE STREET

STILL ANOTHER TIMES SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN: THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY MAY WELL OCCUPY THE NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE, ON 42ND STREET. THE CITY WILL SPEND NOT A PENNY LESS THAN $35 MILLION TO BUY UP A SECTION OF EIGHTH AVENUE. THE ARCHITECT ROBERT A.M. STERN HAS A REAL VISION OF "BILLBOARD PARKS" ABOVE THE STREETS. "ALL THAT OBSCENITY IS GOING TO BE GONE," GOVERNOR CUOMO PROMISES. WHAT DOES THE MAN (OR WOMAN) IN THE STREET THINK SHOULD BE DONE?

BY JONATHON ROSEN



SOLOMON MILLINER, STREET PREACHER: YOU CAN CHANGE THE FACE OF THIS AREA, BUT AS FAR AS MAN'S HEART IT'S STILL GOING TO BE THE SAME. TIME IS RUNNING OUT AND WE'RE VERY CLOSE TO THE END.

KIM, BARTENDER: MORE CLUBS. MORE NIGHTLIFE.

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campus of SUNY Purchase. "You've got everybody—all races, all economic backgrounds, the cross-strains of the whole city. That makes it neat to look around and see. And, with all the celebrities there, it's definitely like a night on Broadway, except that for that night we're the celebrities. We're putting on the show."

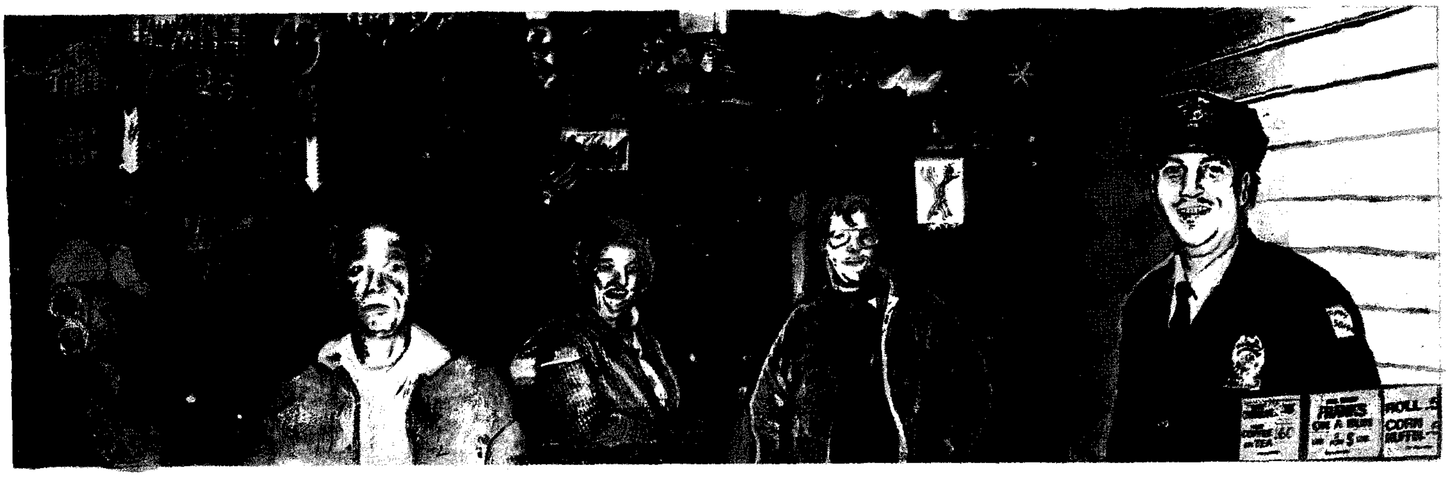
Everyone, it seems, wants to get in on this act. Early in October, at the dedication of the new Purchase practice gym, a priest and a rabbi were on hand to bless the facility; and a spirited Governor Cuomo, who, having been caught up in a very public personal campaign to keep George Steinbrenner, the Yankees' owner, from fleeing the Bronx for the greener (as in money) meadows of Jersey, was more than happy to don a Knicks warmup jacket and drive the lane for a left-handed layup in front of the TV cameramen. At a time when the football Giants and Jets retain only the title of New York, and the Yankees seem poised to follow suit, and the Mets' co-owner Fred Wilpon is dreaming of a new domed, Disney-like multimedia sports complex and convention center, there remains something resonantly, glamorously urban about Knicks basketball. It's not merely the Garden setting but the in-your-face, subway-shoving style of play cultivated there that makes these Knicks the quintessence of "New Yawk," as the Knicks' veteran guard Doc Rivers likes to refer to it. "Hey, I'm from New Yawk!" he yelled back to us on the way to his car after practice. "You see, I'm from Chicago, really, but the accent just comes out naturally now. New Yawk *is* basketball."

Sternly striding the sidelines during games, as he does, in his Armani suits, shaking out the sleeves and putting hand to chin as though pondering a major business deal, the Knicks' coach, Pat Riley, is the embodiment of New York—the city's biggest, and coolest, sports star. Despite the somewhat spacey, New Age-speak of his recent motivational book, "The Winner Within," wherein he writes of establishing "Core Covenants" and ridding ourselves of the "Disease of Me," this is a man who, once a game is under way, wriggles to get out of that suit and onto the court. Peeking through the always closed doors of a Riley-led practice up at Purchase, and seeing him out there on the gym floor in his warmups and among his players, one can glimpse the former basketball star for the University of Kentucky who became the classic, gritty role-player during his nine-year N.B.A. career. Later, as coach of the Los Angeles Lakers, it was his emphasis on tough, aggressive defense that, combined with that team's natural speed, flair, and Magic, made the Lakers a dominant force in the eighties. Now, with the Knicks, there's far less finesse. If they achieve the championship that, with the recent exit of the Bulls' Michael Jordan, everyone seems to be expecting, it will be the result of will, mostly, and, as Riley puts it, in pure New Yorkese, "whatever it takes."

That night at the Garden, the Knicks crushed the Spurs, 95–75, and afterward we paid a visit to their locker room, passing by, nose to navel, a series of towel-wrapped waists, and finding ourself, eventually, stranded in a stand of Knicks. Music played. There was a good deal of happy shouting back and forth. At one point, we got trapped in a ruggedly playful moving-pick executed by seven-foot Patrick Ewing and newly beefed-up John Starks—a smashup the force of which, even in play, didn't bode well for those who will be meeting the Knicks beneath the basket this season.

One might not expect the Riley team-first-and-last credo to work so well in New York. Can the "Disease of Me" be eradicated in a city more or less defined by it? But the Knicks' forward Anthony Mason, whom we found towelling off near his locker, sees a perfect, if unlikely, fit between the New York City street ball he grew up playing out in Queens and the selfless style of play espoused by Riley.

"We hear about the 'Disease of Me' from Coach all the time," he said, with a roll of the eyes. "It's a hard thing to get rid of, with all the individual talent we have, but actually New York City playground ball is about flashy individual style only to a certain point. Out there, the 'Disease of Me' is more the defensive kind. You don't want to get embarrassed. Anybody can shoot and run up points, but when somebody goes past you, shakes you to your knees, and scores, the whole play-



RONNIE, PROFESSIONAL PANHANDLER: I WOULD PUT A PARK RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF TIMES SQUARE, WITH THE TREES AND PICNIC BENCHES, YOU KNOW? MOST OF ALL A LITTLE PLAYGROUND FOR CHILDREN.

ROLF AND KARI DETTKE, GERMAN TOURISTS: STREET ONLY FOR PEOPLE.

VITO PICICCI, SECURITY GUARD: I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU, I REALLY THINK IT'S PERFECT. I LOVE IT JUST THE WAY IT IS. I WOULDN'T CHANGE IT.

ground is going 'Ohhh!' You don't want to be in that position. Not at all. That's how I learned to play defense. So in the end, Pat's kind of ball is very New York. It's very . . ."—Mason's eyes went wide with mischief—"very me!"

THE LONELINESS OF THE YOUNG, GAY CULTURAL CONSERVATIVE

ONE afternoon last week, Bruce Bawer, who has been called the country's leading young conservative literary critic, was describing the kind of research and reflection that has taken up much of his life of late. There was the effort he made to recall the terror of being a boy and on the verge of self-knowledge. There were the notes he took on the "Donahue" show, on Colonel Fred Peck's appearance before the Senate Armed Services Committee, on the columns of William F. Buckley, and on his thoughts about a doctored photograph that showed the heads of President Clinton and Vice-President Gore set atop the bodies of two tanned, ravishing young men who wore nothing but cutoffs, and were posed in a casual embrace. Bawer was gathering material and his thoughts for "A Place at the Table: The Gay Individual in American Society," an account of his experiences as a gay man, as well as a carefully reasoned defense of gay rights, which will be published next week under Simon & Schuster's Poseidon Press imprint.

Over coffee in a West Village café, Bawer, who is thirty-seven years old, did not seem at all like the critic whose literary judgments—large, stern, Eliotian—have been a regular feature in *The New Criterion*, the neoconservative journal. He was wearing jeans and a red plaid shirt, and looked more like a shy, melancholy graduate student as he described, rather uncomfortably, his days watching Phil and his guests—each gay-rights activist paired, inevitably, with "the guy who you knew they'd found by looking in their Rolodex under 'Hates Homos.' " This, as Bawer sees it, is how the debate about gays is played and replayed across the country—a theatrical debate between representatives of two extremes which excludes most straight Americans and also most gay men and women and the things they feel are important. Homosexuality is neither a life style nor an agenda, he maintained. He said that being gay is simply "being attracted to someone of the same gender, rather than the opposite gender"—a fact of nature. He believes that if attitudes and the law allowed it many gays and many lesbians would marry. He said that, after all, "what we're talking about is love."

He tried, in a gingerly way, to explain how views such as these squared with those encountered in *The New Criterion*, whose editor, the art critic Hilton Kramer, has seemed of late to be going beyond denouncing art works with gay themes (Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs, in particular) to taking subtle swipes at gay culture in general. (In his new role as media critic for the *Post*, he recently wrote a column about the *Times* coverage of, among other things, lesbian mothers which ran under the heading "Advancing the Cause of Deviancy.") Bawer recalled that when he began writing for *The New Criterion*, in 1983, he assumed that the journal was not conservative in an overtly political sense, that it was "concerned with culture in a serious way—with the importance of art and culture, and the idea that aesthetic appraisal should be detached." He assumed, too, that because writers and editors at the journal were polite when he brought his lover to dinner, they must be accepting of homosexuality—or, at least, not openly hostile to it. But late last year he began to notice a change. He brought up the 1992 Republican Convention in Houston, where Pat Buchanan called the Democrats "cross-dressers," and teen-age boys in the audience waved signs saying "Family Rights Forever, Gay Rights Never." He expected the conservative writers of his acquaintance to denounce such gay-bashing. "But nobody said anything, nobody wrote anything, nobody did anything," he lamented. Some, he added, spoke as if they'd agreed with Buchanan and his supporters. Finally, in May of this year, at the journal's midtown offices, he saw the galley proofs of a *New Criterion* article, by the *Times Literary Supplement's* American editor, James Bowman, that dealt, in part, with the march on Washington for gay rights. In it, Bowman used terms like "bad boys and girls" and "militant gay agenda," and described the gathering as one organized to promote such notions as "the rights of gays as a specially protected group." When Bawer read the galleys, he blew up, left the offices of the journal, and walked home. "I realized," he said, "that I wanted to leave the magazine." A long talk over lunch a few days later with Kramer—who had once praised Bawer's literary essays as "among the most illuminating . . . that any critic writing in English has given us since the heyday of Edmund Wilson and V. S. Pritchett"—satisfied neither of them. Bawer resigned. The article by Bowman was published in *The New Criterion's* June issue.

As Bawer related all this, he interrupted himself a few times to say, "This is very difficult for me." He may have been comfortable in pronouncing upon books, but not in talking about people. He is not happy that the publicity campaign for his new book may put him in the position of debating a homophobe on talk radio. He worries, though not too much, about teen-age boys like the ones he'd seen at the gym that morning—boys shoving each other and calling each other "faggot." He looks forward to the day when "homosexuality becomes something of absolutely *no interest* whatsoever."

SERGE PERCELLY DOES NOT TAKE JUGGLING LIGHTLY

SERGE PERCELLY has an unusual case of tennis elbow. In the first place, he didn't get it from cracking serves and backhands. In the second place, it's mostly in his head. Percelly, who is slim, Swiss, and twenty-eight years old, juggles tennis racquets for this year's version of the Big Apple Circus, and he does it with such astonishing fervor that he is far and away the star of the show. For eight minutes, he races around the ring keeping tennis balls and, ultimately, five Volkl tennis racquets aloft, his hips gyrating, his feet dancing, and his arms windmilling furiously as racquets tumble from the sky. Joyful, clad in Elvis white, he seems the picture of insouciance. But the circus is a triumph of illusion.

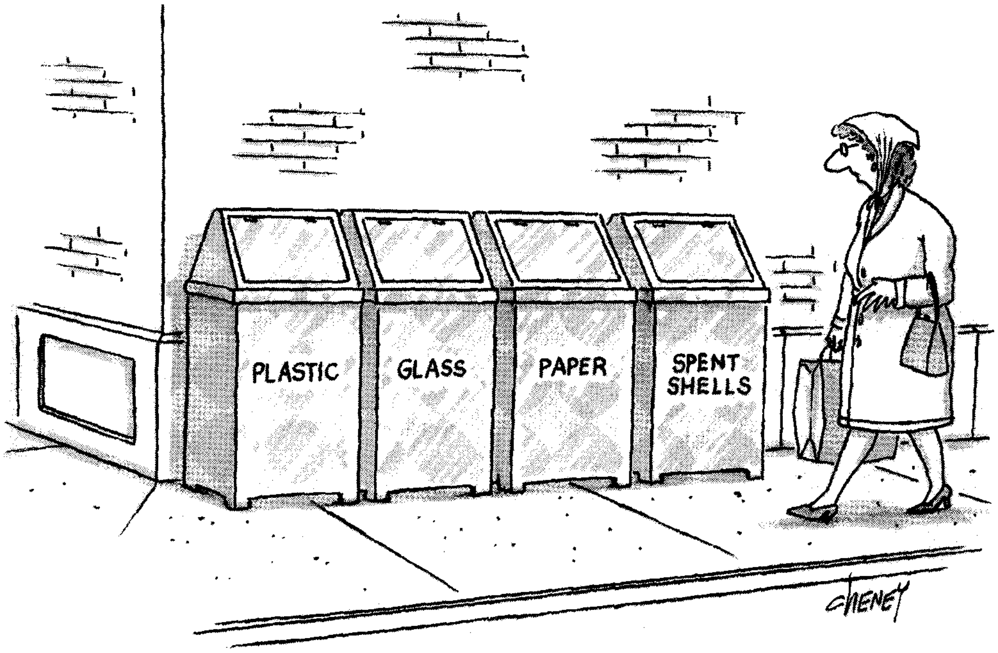
"Jugglers are a bit mad," Percelly said recently over lunch at Zachary's, near Lincoln Center, where the circus has pitched its tent until January 9th. "We don't like to talk to anyone, and we're very nervous." Percelly spends two hours each night just mentally preparing to go on, trying to psych out the demons of failure. "I had a few shows in Reston, Virginia, where I was dropping a lot," he said, absently knocking on the wooden table to ward off mischief. "It's hard to get out of. You're thinking, I'm going to drop. Your arms lock up at the elbow, hurting terribly, and you feel like throwing everything down and saying, 'I can't.' "

Percelly knuckled the table again and stared at his heavy, calloused hands. His high forehead and close-cropped black hair frame his eyes to great effect when he's in the ring, and he has received furious letters from men whose girlfriends won't stop talking about Serge, Serge's hands, Serge's eyes—letters that warn him to stop juggling or else. Now those eyes were hooded. "I have nightmares, always the same, where every racquet falls and the people are booing," he said. "I can see their faces half lit from the stage, and they're all directors of circuses I've worked for—and I'm saying, 'I can do it. Come back,' as the seats are emptying." He laughed. "Then I wake up, and maybe go practice."

He began juggling at fourteen. His father, a renowned whiteface clown with Switzerland's Circus Knie, warned him that acts had to be unique, and suggested that he try tennis racquets. Percelly practiced alone under the stands for six hours a day, he recalled, refusing advice and scowling at anyone who came near. In 1981, when the family was touring with the Boswell-Wilkie Circus in South Africa, he displayed his peculiar talent to the public for the first time. The audiences were delighted; not so the sodality of jugglers. "There were classical jugglers, guys who did seven clubs or nine balls or eleven rings, who said that what I did was nothing," Percelly said. "I know they were just trying to break my act, but it hurt me. And to me they're just robots"—he mimed a blurry-fast but mechanical bit of juggling. "I'd rather see someone go crazy with three clubs."

The act Percelly does is built for maximum craziness. Like a great orator, he inflames and then sates the crowd's rhythmic desires. "Everything fits: three, four, five racquets and out," he explained. "The audience doesn't have time to get more popcorn, or even to clap very long—I don't like it, so I do something else quickly, so they can't. It has to build. At one point, I juggle four and flip them sidewise with three turns, and it's *very* hard, but people don't respond, because it's not the right time yet. You feel like saying, 'Hey, come on, this is a good one!' They want to clap, they want to clap, I won't let them. Then, at the end, they let it all out, standing and waving and screaming and loving you in a great burst of communication." Percelly paused, perhaps seeing himself, as his audiences do, taking his bow on the verge of tears. "But before you even realize it you're back in your trailer, sweating like hell. The silence hits: that was it. You just gave and gave, and now it's over, and you want more. But you're alone with your little Boston terrier, watching TV, and you're depressed."

Percelly then related how he had grown up in that sort of depressed solitude. "I had a rough childhood, because my parents were always travelling with the circus," he said. "From age seven to age fourteen, I lived in Geneva, with my grandmother, and saw them only once a year, for summer holidays. I had no friends, and whenever I tried to explain 'My dad is a clown' the kids would just laugh. I was so lonely and sad, and I wanted to be a dentist, for some reason. Then, one day when I was fourteen, I came out of school and saw my boxer dog tied to the school fence. I shouted 'Timmy!' and ran, and the dog was jumping and licking my face. Then I saw my parents waiting in a Ford Mustang. It's still picture-clear, that moment." Percelly was beaming. "I ran to the car, and right away I asked them, 'When are you going away again?' I always asked them that. Sometimes I didn't even want to see them, because I felt so sick when they were about to leave. They said, 'We go back to Germany tomorrow.' I said, 'I wish I could go with you.' And they said, 'O.K., let's do it.' " Percelly was now as ecstatic as he appears to be in the ring. "I couldn't believe my ears: it was the nicest day in my whole life. Probably, if they hadn't taken me away then I would have seen my childhood as destroyed by the circus. I really don't know what I would have done. I could have become a dentist, even."



NO RELIEF FROM NIGHT LIFE

GRANTED, putting a guy in a cage and then having him act as if he'd had brain surgery that somehow got botched was a pretty hip idea, or so those looking at him, drinks in hand, seemed to think. Yes, making sure he remained seated with the help of a studded dog collar and a chain was a nice touch that everyone on the dance floor appeared to appreciate. What the crowd at the reopening party of Tunnel, on Twelfth Avenue at Twenty-seventh Street, couldn't handle—hard as they might have tried—was the unisex bathroom-cocktail lounge that they found up on the second floor.

Maybe by accident, Peter Gatien, the owner of Tunnel (he also owns Club USA, Limelight, and Palladium), and those who helped him overhaul the club—including Eric Goode, of Area and M.K. fame—built a bar that resembles a toilet without the lid and seat. You order your drinks from the rim. To the left of the bar, as you enter, are the banquettes, a few ottomanlike stools, a line of washbasins, and fourteen toilet stalls; to the right is another wall of washbasins and a row of eight urinals that are more or less open-air. Beyond that is a less trafficked room with eight stalls. Aqua-green tile is everywhere.

The urinals didn't see much playing time. A man wearing wire-rims and a lot of tweed was in a big hurry but he didn't stop at the standard uprights—he entered the room containing only stalls. In about the time it takes to wind a watch, he came back out. We wanted to know why he didn't simply use one of the urinals. "Stagefright," he said. Black leather biker jacket, black leather hot pants, black stockings, and black Ecco boots with zippers—that's what Corin Nelson, the publicity director for Gramercy Pictures, had on when she said, "I'm going wherever there's no guy within three stalls of mine."

In most places, there's a limit to how long you can hang out in a public rest room before you get arrested. With that in mind, we made our way to the exit that led downstairs, where the people with the rings in their noses were having fun. And then we finally heard proof that at least one man wasn't afraid to put a urinal to work. "Damn right, I used one of them," he said, holding two Amstels by the neck in one hand, "and if someone wants to watch me take a piss, then maybe he should get a life."

THE SHORT CUT IS THE DEEPEST

THERE are many short haircuts out there now that a boredom threshold has been reached on the long, middle-parted look. But the one we are noticing the most is the nineties version of the pixie cut. It's tight and tidy, and, though it has sweet little spiky bangs lying flat on the forehead, it leaves the face unmercifully exposed. The story has it that the pixie, or urchin, cut originated in Italy in the early fifties, so that the girls riding their Vespa motor scooters wouldn't get hair in their eyes. Almost immediately, the pixie became a fashion statement, to be associated forevermore with a type of sophisticated innocence—a knowing girlishness.

Today's pixie is being worn not only by white women but by Asian and African-American women as well. It comes in two flavors: chocolate and vanilla. The brunettes are, generally speaking, boyish yet tender; the blondes could remind you of Jean Seberg in "Breathless"—waifish, yes, but capable of whatever the deed requires. The most extreme—shorter than short, yet not quite punk redux—make the wearer look like Joan of Arc, shorn for battle.

None of these cuts, however, should be confused with a bob (that's the one that Linda Evangelista has; the one that Louise Brooks, in the role of Lulu, died wearing). When, in the early twenties, Bernice bobbed her hair, she was thinking emancipation, not vulnerability. Smoky-eyed, rouge-lipped, that New Woman imagined herself a dangerous creature, moving to the acute angles of modernism, and to a jazz beat. She courted experience; the pixie waif—wide-eyed, openmouthed, unmade-up (ha!)—strives mightily to convince you she has had none, yet.

What ties all of history's short-croppings together is youth. Joan of Arc, after all, was only nineteen when the English burned her. Just the right age for a supermodel. ♦

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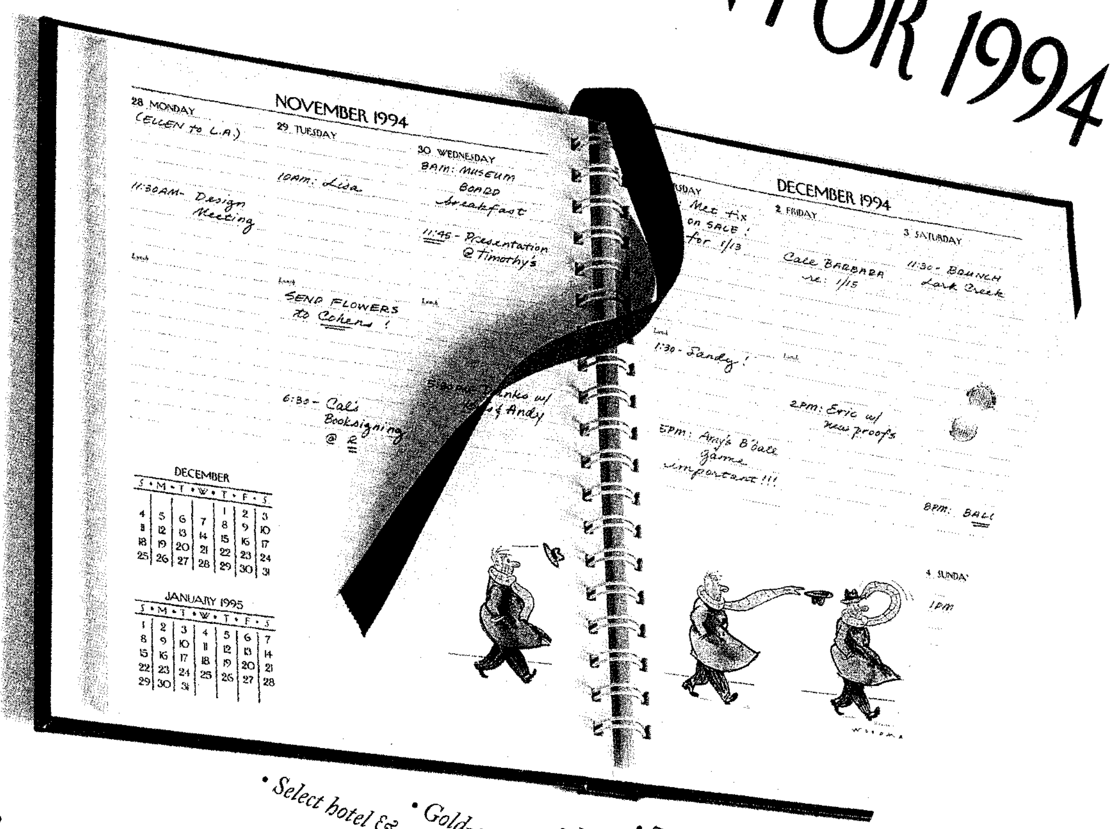
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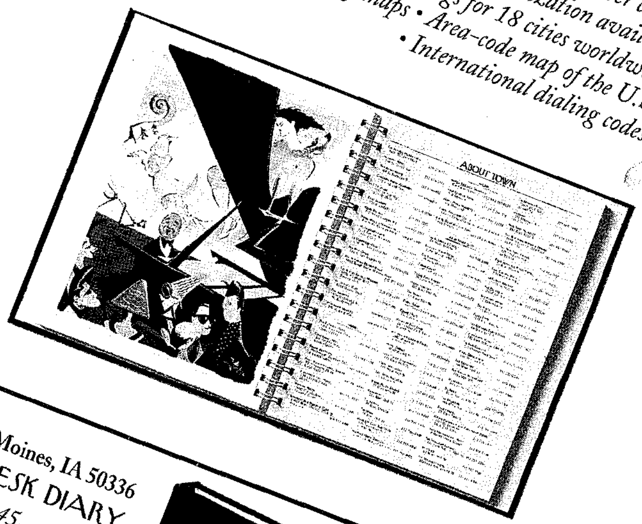

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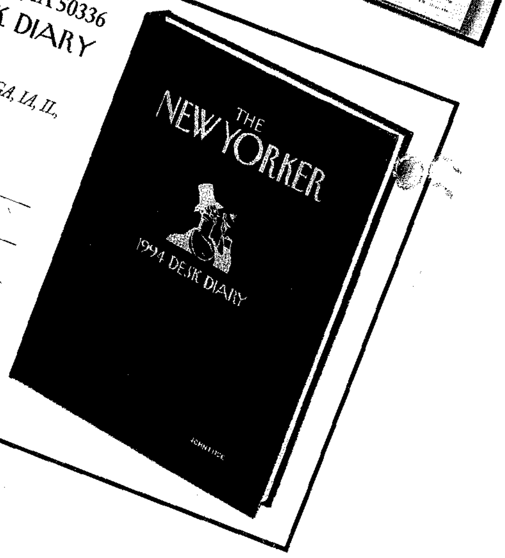
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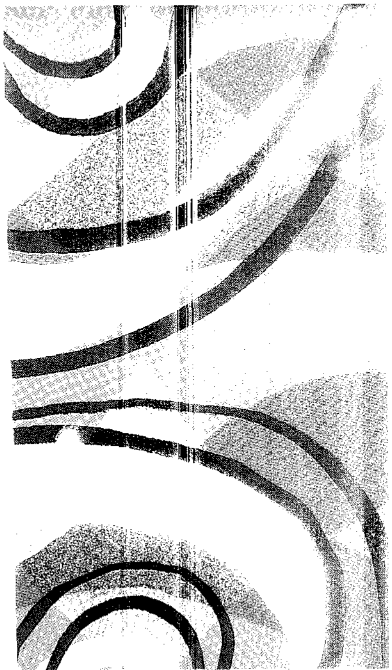

Winter Escapes

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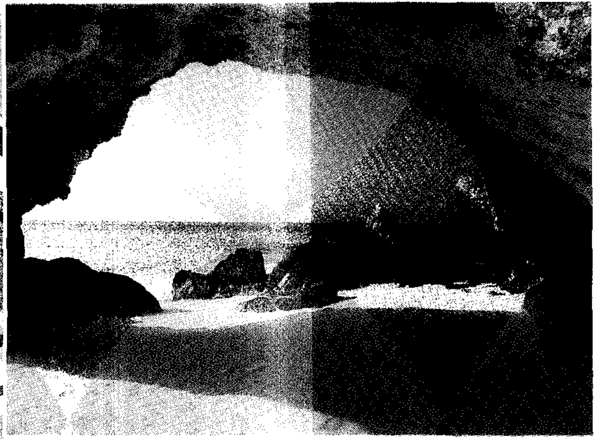
Daylight savings time ends just when you need it most . . . . By the time you tamed your golf slice, the sand trap was filled with snow . . . . You didn't fit into last summer's bikini until the week before Labor Day . . . . A tan out of season looks even better than one in July . . . . Nobody but Santa Claus gets any work done in December . . . . Your kid just flunked out of college and moved home—for good . . . . If you don't use your vacation days by the end of the year you'll never see them again . . . . You can't find the chains, the shovel, or the rock salt.

Excellent reasons all for a winter escape. But in case you need a few others . . .

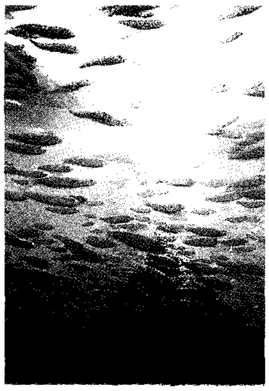
Just a few hours away from where you are right now there's a little bit of summer waiting for you in the sapphire seas of the Caribbean, the Atlantic, and the Pacific, all warmed by the sun and cooled by gentle trade winds . . . . At one—or a dozen—of these places, there's the ideal resort for a family vacation, the luxury spa for a midwinter tune-up, the perfect retreat for a management meeting, the incomparably romantic hotel for a honeymoon. And somewhere in all of that paradise there's a game fish ready for a tussle, a coral reef that needs exploring, a rain forest waiting to be found, a long white-sand beach for stretching out on, a waterfall splashing silver in the sun.

To discover the destinations where the only choice you have to make is between a hammock and a lounge chair, where the only numbers that count are the ones on your golf card, and the only orders you have to give are to a waiter, read on.



Left: © Murray & Associates, *Top:* © L.L.T. Rhodes

Clockwise from below: a school of fish swims in the warm Caribbean sea; the spectacular view of the beach from the Natural Arch in Bermuda; Hawaii's beauty comes from its many tropical plants.



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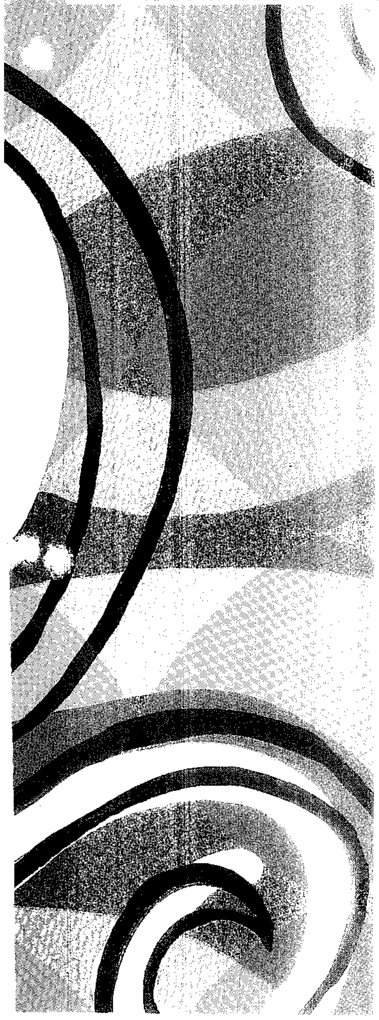

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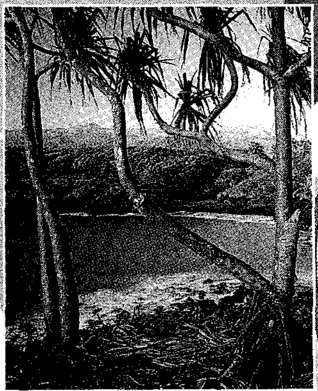
Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is a lush retreat.

On Maui, the Seven Sacred Springs and the incredible sunrises over Mount Haleakala aren't to be missed. And, just off Maui's shores, the fragile beauty and laid-back ambience of the smaller islands of Molokai and Lanai enchant visitors. Lanai has two resorts: one nestled in the pines and the other overlooking a marine reserve. These resorts offer visitors the opportunity to enjoy the true Hawaiian way of life. Take the time to enjoy these two lush spots before development catches up with them.



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There are black sand beaches on Maui.

The Big Island offers the most dramatic *son et lumiere* show of them all: the ongoing eruption of Kilauea volcano—which the locals call Pele's Revenge—as well as Mauna Kea, which boasts Hawaii's only ski slope, and a lively artists' colony in Honolulu.

While the mass of tourists still flocks to Waikiki, smart travellers head for Oahu's less crowded heart, with its lush valleys, or the stunning beaches on the leeward coast for incredible day trips.

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The Caribbean
. . . And Beyond

Taste of the Tropics

Islands have always served as travellers' crossroads, and so their cuisines have naturally developed by using tasteful combinations of fresh local ingredients mingled with mainland cooking styles and seasonings. In the Caribbean, island fish, fruits, and vegetables are spiced with the flavors of many cultures, particularly French, Spanish, East Indian, English, Dutch, and Creole.

But no matter where you travel to, or what imported influences hold sway in its kitchens, there is one universal truth: fish fritters are a staple everywhere. In Dominica they're called *ti ti-oui* and are made from a tiny local fish that's used whole. In the Spanish-speaking countries, like the Dominican Republic, and in Puerto Rico as well as in Miami's Cuban restaurants, they're known as *bacalaitos* and are made with codfish. In Jamaica they're known as stamp and go, and the batter is ground black-eyed peas; in St. Maarten, Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire, the *cala* is made with a heavier batter. And the *acrat de morue* on Guadeloupe, St. Bart's, Martinique, and St. Martin is a savory fritter with decidedly French overtones.

Vacationing epicures, though, do not live by fritters alone, and thus a visit to Guadeloupe's Festival of the Cooks, put on by the Societe des Cuisiniers, is always in order. The two hundred women chefs who participate in this event (all dressed in native finery, complete with elaborate headdresses) prepare their best dishes, put them in baskets trimmed with cooking utensils, and carry it all to the local cathedral to be blessed at a special high mass.

And there are myriad other special gustatorial delights in these remarkable lands, including those of Barbados's Baxter Road, where, at midnight on weekends, there's an open-air marketplace at which fresh flying fish is pan-fried over wood fires and served up in brown-paper wrapping; and those of Crop Over, a major holiday marking the end of the sugarcane harvest, which features a superb selection of local food available from street vendors.

In Jamaica, jerk chicken and pork are favorites, and local chefs prepare them in the old Carib and Arawak style. They jerk the meat with a sharp object, stuff the holes with spices, and smoke it over green wood, a technique that seals in an incomparable, juicy flavor. Palm fritters are a special delicacy in the Bahamas. Made from the delicate heart of palm trees (which tastes remarkably like artichoke), they're fried in a light batter and then dipped in chutney. And on Little Cayman Island, Gladys Howard, a Cordon Bleu graduate who operates her own cooking school, offers visitors a reason besides Bloody Bay Wall to visit the island; for here they'll discover what may simply be the finest food in the Caribbean.

Paradise found: Cane Garden Bay on Tortola, one of the British Virgin Islands.

© Tom & Michelle Grimm

Gladys's Cayman Coconut Pecan Pie

1 cup of sugar
1 cup of unsweetened shredded coconut
1 1/2 cups of milk
1/2 cup of all-purpose flour
1/2 cup of chopped pecans
1/4 cup of room-temperature unsalted butter
4 eggs
1 1/2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
3/4 teaspoon of baking powder
1/4 teaspoon of salt
toasted shredded coconut,
whipped cream

Mix the first ten ingredients in a blender or processor until well combined. Pour into a greased ten-inch pie pan. Bake at 325° for thirty-five minutes or until the pie is golden brown and firm to the touch. Sprinkle on toasted coconut, and serve warm topped with whipped cream.

Bazaars and Bargains

It's true that the very best values from any vacation are the memories you take home from them. But there's also an abundance of tangible values—authentic bargains—available in the forms of locally made crafts and goods, and heavily discounted or truly duty-free items, which vary in price according to local customs regulations and country of origin.

The twelve-hundred-dollar duty-free allowance for United States citizens can be pleasantly stretched by purchasing liquor in St. Martin and liqueur in Curaçao; French fragrances and cosmetics in St. Martin, Guadeloupe, St. Bart's, and Martinique; Italian leather goods and Swedish crystal in Aruba; jewelry, perfume, crystal, liquor, china, linen, and watches in the Bahamas; Dutch cheese in Aruba, Curaçao and Bonaire; and discounted British-manufactured porcelain, china, and crystal in Anguilla, the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Antigua, and the British Virgin Islands; cashmeres and porcelains in Bermuda; and jewelry, linen, and leather in St. Thomas, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the biggest duty-free port in the Caribbean.

Outdoor markets are common in the Caribbean.

© Donald Nausbaum

Other great buys include the postage stamps of Anguilla, which are highly prized by collectors, and the hats and unusual straw sandals and slippers to be found in the straw market in the Bahamas. The ABC islands (Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao) have marvelous batiks imported from Bali and other areas of Indonesia as well as locally made textiles. In the Caymans you'll find tortoise-shell ornaments made from locally farmed turtles. (Note that these objects will require an

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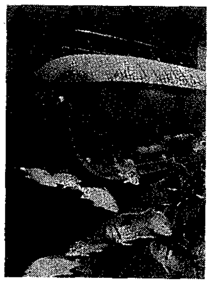
Fascinating underwater world

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In the Caribbean

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2. Silver Bank Whale Sanctuary, Dominican Republic
3. Guanica Reserve, Puerto Rico
4. Saba Marine Park, Saba
5. Maria Island Nature Reserve, St. Lucia
6. Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary, Trinidad
7. Barbados Wildlife Reserve
8. Curaçao Underwater Park

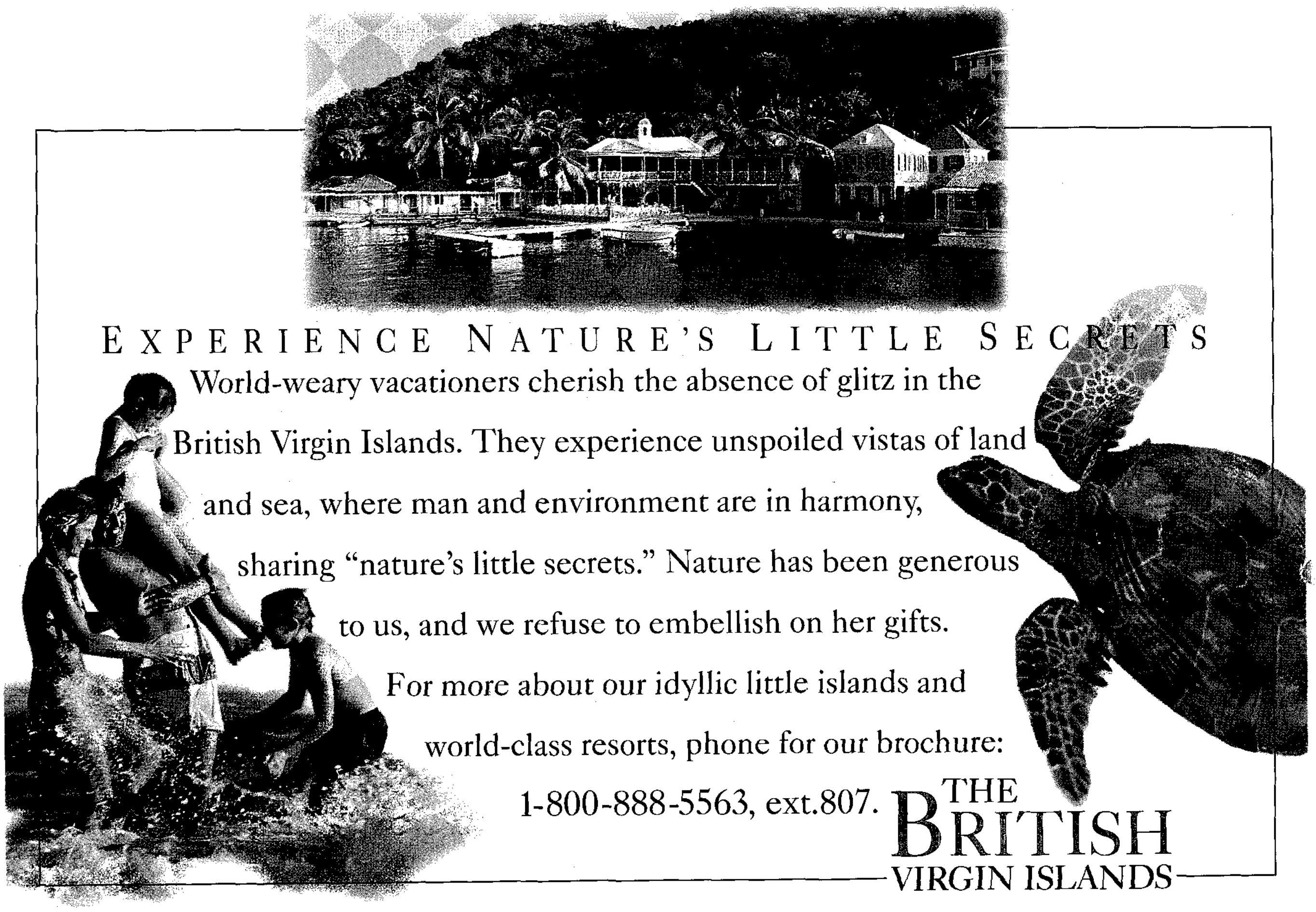
export certification in order for them to be taken off the islands.) Dominica's verti-verti mats and local pottery are popular souvenirs, while in the Dominican Republic the real steal is amber and larimar jewelry, since the country has so many large deposits of the semi-precious mineral. Creole dolls, beautifully worked and costumed, are tourist favorites in the French Antilles; Grenada, the spice island, is the place to stock up on ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, and locally made cosmetics that combine cocoa butter and nutmeg in wonderful lotions and shampoos.

Puerto Rico has art galleries that feature the best of island painting and sculpture, as well as antique and modern *santos*—small hand-carved wooden religious figures. In Jamaica, indigenous alabaster carvings, local pottery, and painted cedar sculptures are popular, and here, as in Trinidad, local music stores and street vendors carry tapes and compact discs of local reggae, calypso, soca, and steel bands that you can't find off-island. Montserrat has crocheted laces, local cottons and batik; in Guadeloupe, look in the marketplace at Point a Pitre for the most unusual of souvenirs—bottles of spray-on blessings—as well as broad-brimmed fishermen's hats, called *salakos*, that make great sunshades.

St. John, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, is known for its pottery, particularly the rough-textured coral work created by the artisans of Cruz Bay. The hand-blocked print fabrics of artist Jean Yves Froment, of St. Bart's, make wonderful pillows, throws, and dresses. Saba lace is intricate thread work embroidered onto shirts, napkins, and aprons; home-brewed, rum-based Saba spice, which you can buy in Windwardside or Bottom, is worthy of a place in your spirits collection.

© Oliver Benn

In St. Kitts, local artisans incorporate Indian petroglyph designs on hot-waxed batiks; the Newcastle Pottery, on Nevis, finishes its red-clay crafts over open fires fuelled by coconut husks, the way the Caribs and Arawaks did it hundreds of years ago. (And this is the only place in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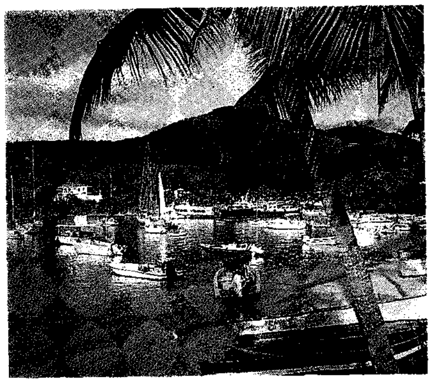


© Larry Ulrich

the world you'll find this primitive, utilitarian tableware for sale.) In Dominica, the best buys are straw rugs and exquisite baskets made by Caribs who live on the Atlantic side of the island, on the only Carib reservation in the world.

Far left: the sound of steel bands ring through the Caribbean; *above:* U.S.V.I.'s St. John attracts boaters; *left:* a Common Egret stands guard in Florida's Everglades National Park.

© Raymond G. Barnes

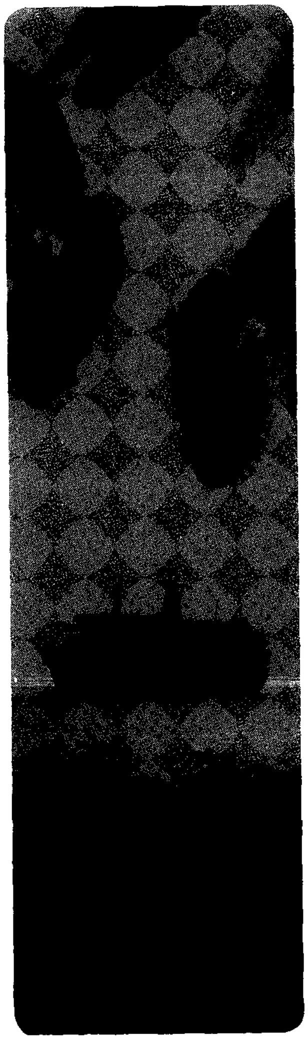
Ecotropical Delights

Tropical rain forests and active volcanoes, bubbling hot springs and verdant woodlands, flamingo sanctuaries and coral reefs, alabaster beaches and crystalline waters, rare flora and fauna, and spectacular moorages—these are the favorite things that call travellers to the Caribbean, that beckon the winter-weary to Hawaii and Florida's Keys and Everglades, that charm honeymooners in Bermuda.

Each destination, of course, has its own signature charms that are easily seen, but some of the spectacular scenery to be experienced in these lands lies tucked away for travellers to discover. Like Lucayan National Park in the Bahamas, the largest underwater cave system in the world; or the Park under the Sea, in Trunk Bay on the north side of St. John. Shrouded in the mists of Puerto Rico's El Yunque is the only tropical rain forest in the United States. Beneath the steaming crater of Kilauea, on the Big Island of Hawaii, is the only active volcano in America.

Each destination has its own signature charms that are easily seen, but some of the spectacular scenery lies tucked away.

You have to sit quietly in a swamp at sunset to catch the huge flocks of scarlet ibis that come to roost for the night in the nature reserves of Trinidad, or drive



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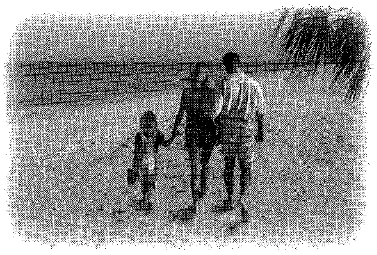

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Bloody Bay Wall in the Caymans is a favorite spot for divers.

© Freddy Storheil

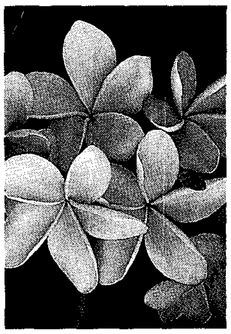
out to the end of a wild national park in Bonaire to spot the flamingos in their sanctuary. You have to dive to the coral-encrusted relics beneath Saba's pinnacles, hike into the Indian ceremonial parks in the mountains of Jamaica, sail into the secluded anchorages of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tortola, and Virgin Gorda, in the British Virgin Islands.

Hikers and trekkers should head for Pico Duarte, in the Dominican Republic. In Jamaica's Blue Mountains and Puerto Rico's Cerro de Punta, mountaineers can join local guides on summit expeditions. Day hikers can climb Saba's thousand and sixty-four hand-hewn steps to the summit of Mount Scenery—without the services of a guide.

Know too, that all this marvelous geography is home to rare and beautiful plants, flowers, and creatures, which are often protected in nature preserves and bird sanctuaries, as well as splendid gardens—both public and private.

If gardens are your thing, head for the newly opened Cayman Islands Botanic Park. The Park's award-winning gardens feature more than two hundred plants and a collection of rare cacti from Cuba.

You can whale-watch during their annual spring and fall migrations in Anguilla, St. Bart's, the Dominican Republic, and Maui, Hawaii. Birding in the Caribbean is almost as popular as beachcombing—which is one of the top tourist attractions in Hawaii. Dedicated shell seekers on these Pacific islands check out the tide charts first, then head for the beach to augment their collections with the rare and valuable specimens that wash ashore.



Hawaii's vibrant Yellow Plumerias.

The Sporting Life

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2. Jazz Festival, Aruba, June
3. Jouvert, Antigua, first Tuesday in August
4. Junkanoo, Bahamas, December 26 and January 1
5. Pirates Week, Cayman Islands, last week in October
6. Carnival, February, and Merengue Festival, July, Dominican Republic
7. Sunsplash, Reggae Festival, August, Jamaica
8. Mardi Gras, February, and Toussaint, November, Martinique
9. Vincy Mas Carnival, end of June, St. Vincent

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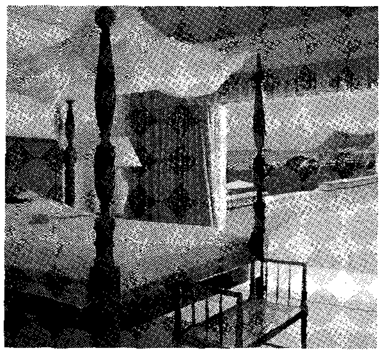

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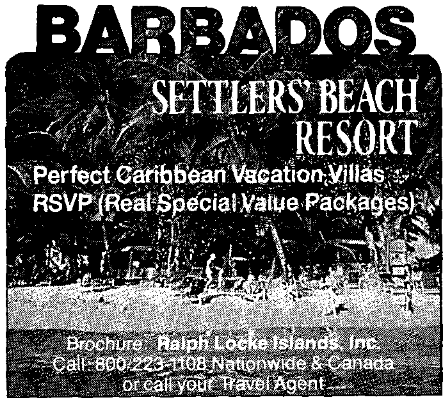

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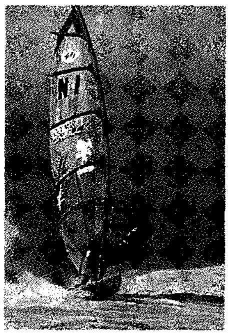
Surfers looking for steep Pacific rollers will find them in abundance off Oahu, Maui, and Kauai. In the Caribbean, Antigua's Half Moon Bay; Cabarete, in the Dominican Republic; the sandy beaches of Puerto Rico; and Bathsheba, in Barbados, are popular places to hang ten, especially from December to April, when the northeastern trade winds build up powerful swells that break on the Atlantic coasts. From Tortola to Tampa Bay, you can charter a yacht for a day sail or a month-long cruise. Windsurfers come from all over the world to compete in annual contests in Aruba, and there are well-established windsurfing centers in Trinidad's Marcas Bay, St. Kitts' Frigate Bay, on the north and west coasts of Jamaica, and on the west coast of Puerto Rico.



Windsurfing is especially good in the Caribbean.

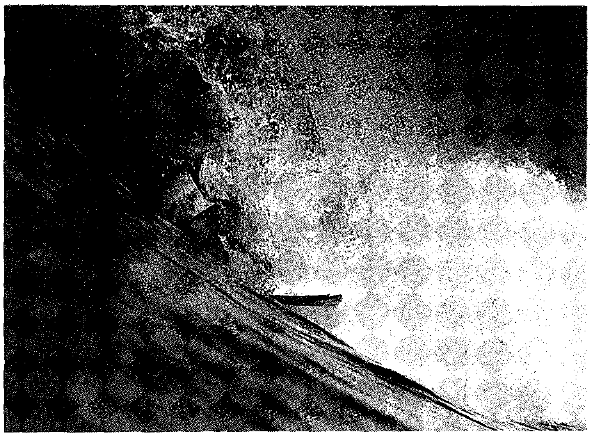
Snorkelers have always favored the Caribbean for its rich coral reefs, varied marine life, and easy access from miles of unspoiled beaches. The Baths on Virgin Gorda, the beautiful lagoons in St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John, the calm waters just off the 365 beaches of Anguilla and Barbuda, Puerto Rico's Culebra Island, and the new marine park in Curaçao are on every snorkeler's prime-destination list.

Scuba divers have their wish lists too: fish that can't be found anywhere else inhabit these waters, walls, caves, blue holes, shipwrecks, and pinnacles, with enough underwater variety to suit every bubble junkie. Among the favorites: Bloody Bay Wall in the Cayman Islands; Kleine Bonaire, just off the Dutch Island of Bonaire (where you might spot an elusive seahorse); the wreck of the *Rhone* in Tortola; the hundreds of shipwrecks off Bermuda, which boasts the northernmost coral reef in the world and where visibility sometimes approaches two hundred feet; and Blue Waters, in Tobago, where the entire manta-ray population of the Caribbean seems to congregate every April to frolic among the most unspoiled reefs in the islands.

> Looking for a place to perfect your chip shot? Some of the finest golf courses in the world are surrounded by tropical waters.

The promise of action-packed deep-sea fishing might lure you to Tampa Bay; the Bahamas, especially to Eleuthera or Bimini; the Cayman Islands; Palmas del Mar in Puerto Rico; or the British and U.S. Virgin Islands, particularly to St. Thomas or St. John's Caneel Bay. Bermuda and Hawaii host big-game-fishing tournaments annually as well.

If you've just gotten out of the water, though, and are looking for a place to perfect your chip shot, you're still in luck: some of the finest golf courses in the world are surrounded by tropical waters. These links, which have been designed to take full advantage of the spectacular views, challenge the amateur as well as the professional player.



Get your boards ready–the surf's up in Puerto Rico.

© Tony Arruza

Bermuda has more golf courses per square mile than any country in the world; Puerto Rico may be a close second. The big resort hotels often have their own courses, and most hotel

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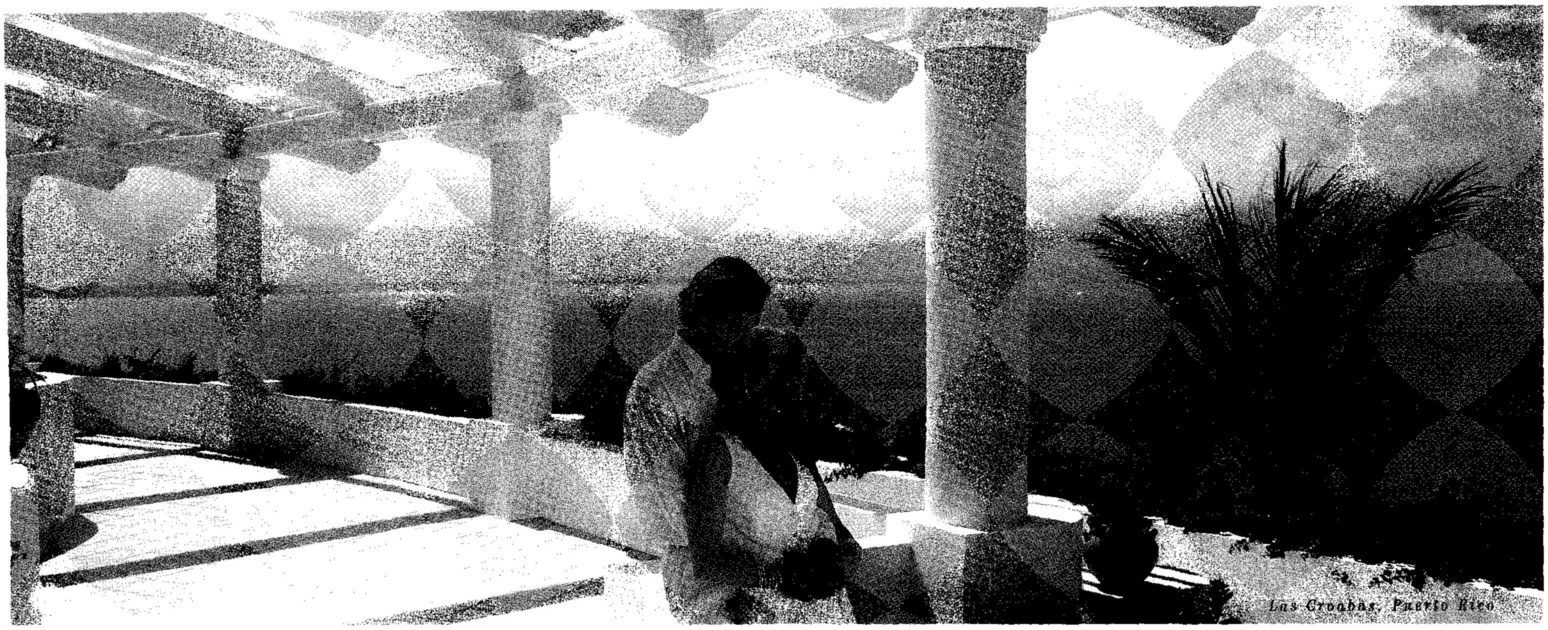

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If you still have energy to burn, many islands—including Bonaire, Aruba, and the Big Island of Hawaii—have yearly triathlons that combine swimming, biking, and running. Hawaii's Ironman Triathlon combines a 2.4-mile open-water swim, a 112-mile bike race, and a 26-mile run; it's one of the world's most challenging events.

Bright-colored hats are worn to celebrate Junkanoo in the Bahamas.

Remember, though, that a vacation doesn't have to be an endurance test—unless you want it to be. Most people come for the beaches, and turning over to baste the other side of your body may be all the exercise you need. Without expending too much effort, you can find the perfect spot to do just that.

Some places have a more formal attitude than others about sunbathing. While there are nudist beaches on French St. Martin, for instance, Dutch St. Maarten is a bit stodgier. In Bermuda, keep your clothes on en route to the beach and your swimsuits on once you are there: the bobbies, despite their Bermuda shorts, enforce the local ordinances about proper attire. Antigua boasts that it has 365 beaches, one for every day of the year, and the beaches along the Na Pali coast of Kauai are so secluded you may never see another soul on them.

Bottom Bay Beach in Barbados ... beautiful.

© Doug Armand

Take the time to discover the powdery, palm-dotted expanses of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico's Culebra Island, Oahu's Waikiki; the white sands of Anguilla; the black sands of St. Kitts and Montserrat; the pinks sands of Bermuda; the secluded coves of the BVI; and Grand Cayman's Seven Mile beaches, which number among the finest in the world.

Spectacular Sunsets

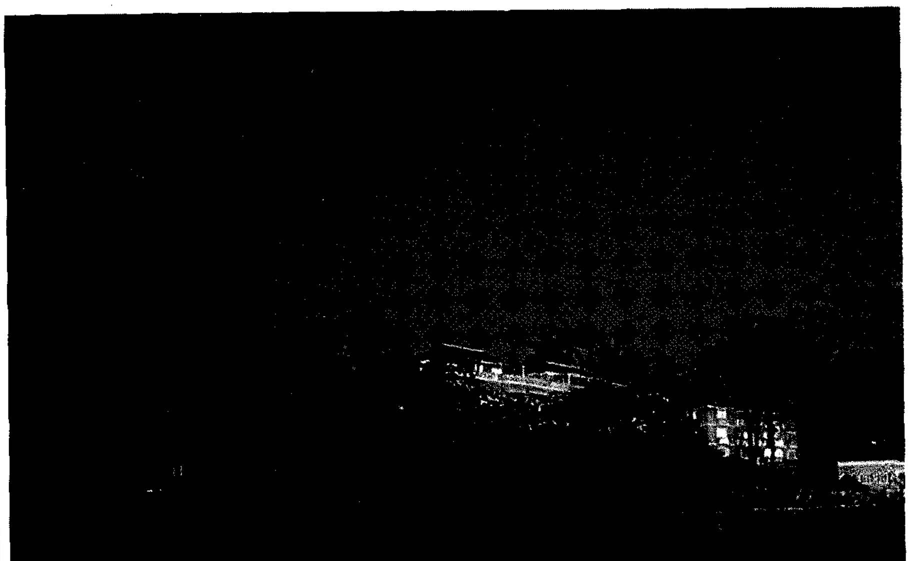
Nightlife in paradise begins with a spectacular sunset and then goes on . . . to a midnight skinny dip in a secluded cove, a moonlight sail under starry skies, the sight of a flock of flamingos roosting in the mangroves.

But that's not all there is to do when the sun goes down because the islands come alive with their own distinctive rhythms. There are the world-famous reggae bands of Jamaica; the calypso, soca, and steel bands of Trinidad; the merengue of the Dominican Republic; the "jump ups"—steel bands swinging down the street, followed by dancing crowds of tourists and islanders—in Trinidad, Martinique, and Barbados. There's local—and sometimes imported—talent in the larger hotels on most of the islands, and even in the smallest hotel there's likely to be a steel band playing on weekends. In Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, revelers jam the discos and nightclubs on the Malecon, and the overflow crowd dances the merengue in the streets; in the Old Town of San Juan, Puerto Rico, there are great, glitzy, feather- and sequin-covered floor shows.

> **After the sun sets, try a moonlight sail under starry skies or a midnight skinny dip in a secluded cove.**

The performances in St. Thomas feature limbo dancing, fire-eating, and bottle dancing; the zouk clubs of Fort de France, Martinique, specialize in West Indian jazz and cater to a devoted clientele. After midnight on Barbados head for the rum

© Cliff Hollenbeck



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© Peter Poulides

A cook prepares fish kebabs, Turkish-style.

© Hugh Sitton

The sun sets on Santorini, Greece.

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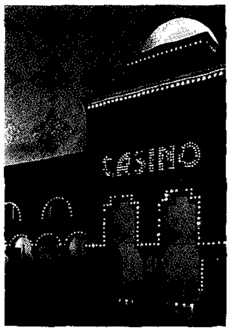
Gambling is legal on many Caribbean islands, notably in the Dutch Netherlands Antilles and some former British colonies. But they've also been spinning the wheel and placing bets in Puerto Rico's casinos for years, especially in Old and New San Juan and the great resort hotels on the Gold Coast. Some of the casinos are quite lavish, like those found in Nassau, Freeport, and Paradise Island, in the Bahamas; Aruba's high-rise, high-rolling gambling palaces; and the Dominican Republic's huge casino in Santo Domingo. Then there are the more casual clubs in Anguilla and St. Kitts/Nevis, and the Caribbean's only "barefoot casino," a homey Bonaire landmark.



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Aruba's Crystal Casino lights up the night.

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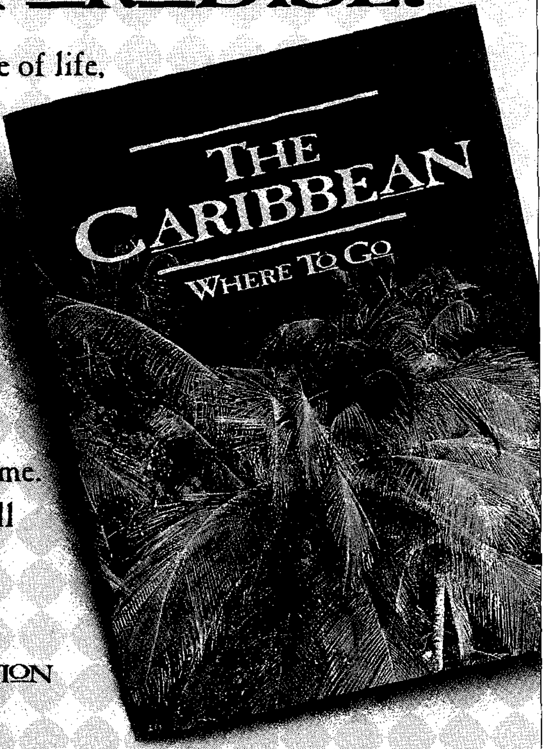

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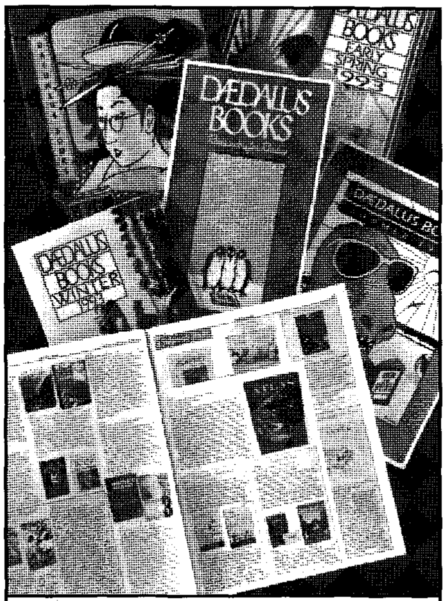

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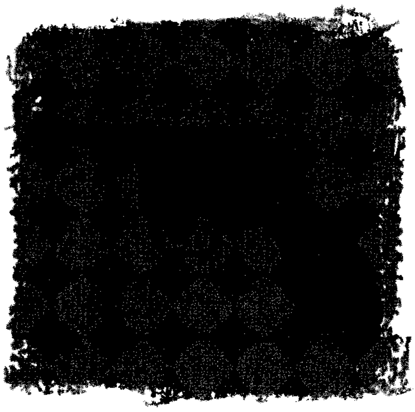
ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

THE ELECTRONIC PARENT

The entertainment industry is scrambling for an answer to violence after Janet Reno's latest salvo, but a San Francisco radio show may already have one.

BY KEN AULETTA

Attorney General Janet Reno and certain members of Congress admit they do not watch much of the television programming they have been attacking of late, and they probably haven't given a lot of thought to the constitutional consequences of their proposals for taming TV violence, but their criticism has nonetheless struck a nerve. Official Washington has caught up with public sentiment, and the loudest cries for action are now coming from liberals, such as Senator Paul Simon, of Illinois, Representative Edward Markey, of Massachusetts, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson, in addition to Reno; meanwhile, the radical right and former Vice-President Dan Quayle no longer serve as convenient bogeymen, allowing Hollywood to equate criticism with censorship. While it is true that rap music that refers to women as "bitches," and Arnold Schwarzenegger movies in which people are casually killed ("*Hasta la vista*, baby"), and video games that invite players to gain points by slaying an opponent, and made-for-TV Amy Fisher movies, and tabloid-TV and blood-and-guts print journalism have less impact on violent behavior than poverty, drugs, guns, and broken homes, as Hollywood claims, it is also beyond doubt that media images can affect the way people act. It is clear that the current Touchstone film "The Program" influenced the behavior of the handful of teen-agers who recently sought to prove their manhood by lying in the middle of a highway at night: they were aping the macho stunt of the film's college football players. After two young men were killed and two others were injured, Touchstone, which is owned by Disney, ordered the scene removed from the film.



JAMES STEINBERG

Privately, entertainment executives are predicting that Touchstone's action will be followed by attempts on the part of other media executives to demonstrate that they are responsible citizens. In a conversation I had recently with Jeffrey Sagansky, the president of CBS Entertainment, he said, "Do we have a responsibility to help kids deal with violence? I think we do. There is a separation of our public responsibility and our job responsibility, and we have to make them coincide more closely. It's not enough to say, 'I won't let my kid watch it, but it's going to make money.' " Sagansky's observations suggest a couple of questions: What might citizens say or do that would further induce media executives to think twice about the impact of violence, just as they now think twice about glamorizing alcohol, drugs, and smoking? And what positive steps might the media initiate to help stanch an epidemic of violence?

At a time when a lot of talk radio has become little more than shouting, KMEL's "Street Soldiers" offers a tantalizing media model. Each Monday night, from 10 P.M. to 2 A.M., KMEL, San Francisco's No. 1 music station, uses this call-in show to discourage violence and serve as a kind of electronic parent for violence-prone young people. On a fairly typical Monday night not long ago, an eleven-year-old girl phoned to say, "My father is drunk and he beats me," and to complain that her parents took drugs. "I really want them to quit, but I don't know how to tell them," she said. She was speaking to Joseph E. Marshall, Jr., and Margaret Norris, the program's hosts. A black teen-ager phoned to complain about white folks

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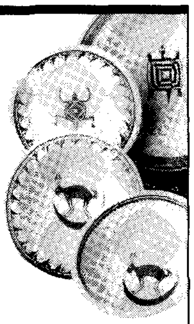

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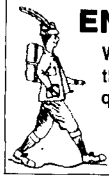

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who glared at him as if he were a predator. "The madness builds up inside you," he said. Another young caller described an argument he had witnessed in which a ten-year-old had announced, "I'm going to get my gun."

When Marshall asked what had happened next, the boy said he had heard that someone had been shot, but homicides were so commonplace that he wasn't sure. A girl with a sweet voice called and said that, at the age of fourteen, she was both a recovering alcoholic and a former gang member. She got out of the gang because seven friends of hers had died in one year, she said, but she didn't know how to get out of her home, where she lived with an abusive father and a drug-addicted mother.

These kids tell their troubles to Marshall and Norris because they want adult advice. Joe Marshall, who is black (as is Norris), is a lanky, forty-six-year-old high-school teacher who sometimes dresses as casually as many of his listeners do—in a T-shirt, jeans, and sneakers. He has short hair and an incandescent smile. The call-in show he presides over was launched in November of 1991 by the rap performer Hammer, who took the title "Street Soldiers" from one of his songs. A couple of months later, the station recruited Marshall, who is the nonsalaried executive director of San Francisco's Omega Boys Club, as the show's permanent host. Despite a voice that can become squeaky and high-pitched, and despite the fact that he is three decades older than most of his listeners, Marshall commands the attention of up to two hundred thousand people every Monday night.

Margaret Norris is a regal forty-one-year-old high-school English teacher with intricately braided hair. She attended the University of San Francisco, as Marshall did, and now serves as the academic director of the Omega Boys Club. The notion of family is at the core of the club, where young people between the ages of twelve and twenty-five are befriended and given academic, employment, and violence-prevention training; many of the club's members receive college scholarships.

Norris and Marshall do not shy away from dispensing parental advice. Both at the Boys Club and on "Street Soldiers," they behave the way Janet Reno and some members of Congress seem to want the media to: like surrogate parents. To the

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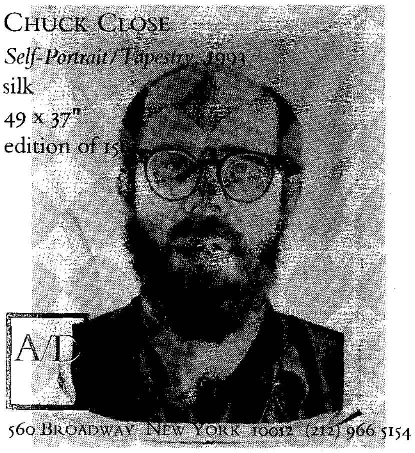

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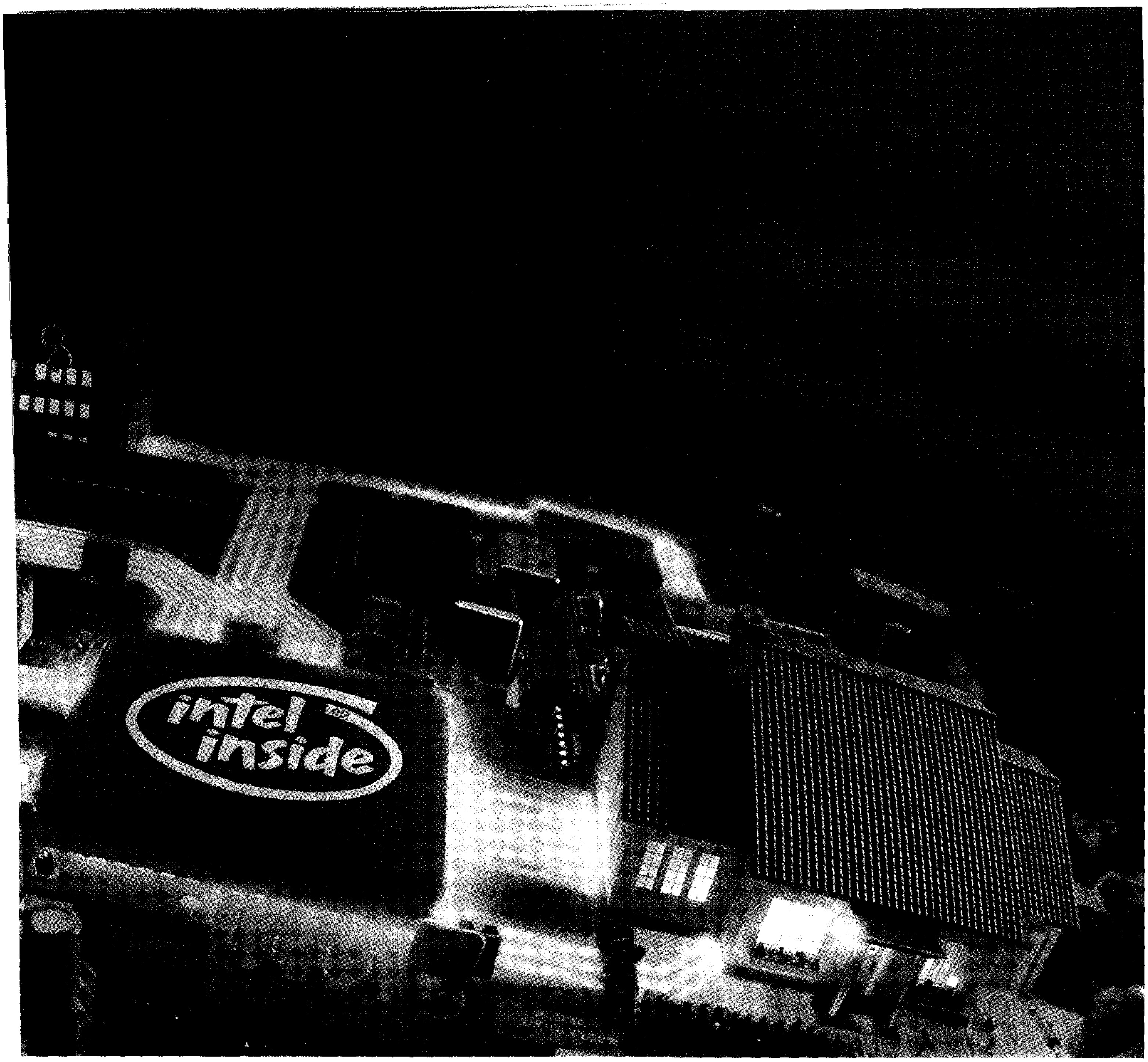

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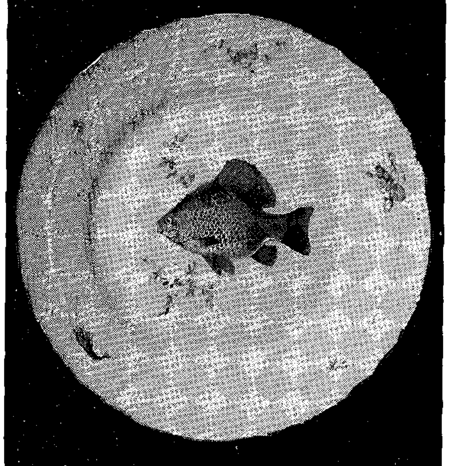

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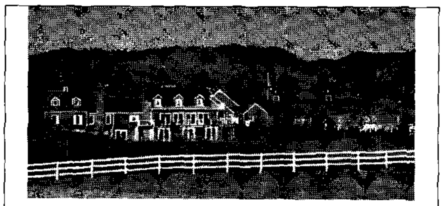

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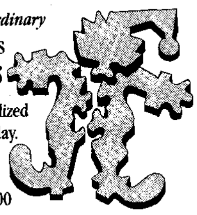

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boy who heard the ten-year-old say he was going to get a gun, Norris said, "What were you doing out so late?"

When a teen-age girl called and mentioned a friend whose boyfriend beat her, Marshall responded sternly, "If the sister don't say nothin', the brother thinks he's supposed to do that."

Unquestionably, the show has helped avert violence. When a Samoan teenager was slain, apparently by Filipino gang members, in a drive-by shooting, the phones lit up with calls from Samoans wanting to tell Marshall they would not rest until they had exacted revenge. Threats filled the air for a couple of weeks. Then the dead Samoan's father called in, and, in a poignant exchange, the father said he couldn't tolerate the thought of more young men senselessly slaughtered. There would be no retaliation, he vowed. And there was none.

Marshall believes that the young men and women who make up his radio audience, like the hundreds of inner-city youths his six-year-old organization is currently working with, feel orphaned by all institutions—their families, their communities, the government, the media. Thinking that no one cares "has the effect of making you not care about yourself," Marshall says. "That's what we hear from a lot of our callers. They say, 'The larger world doesn't care about me, so I don't care about me.' We're saying on the show, 'We care about you.' We've got to become their family. That's the model."

I first encountered Marshall a few months ago, at a two-day conference in Washington, D.C., on "Safeguarding Our Youth: Violence Prevention for Our Nation's Children," which was attended by community organizers, educators, editors and broadcasters, and law-enforcement and other government officials from across the country. Participants received reams of statistics from the Attorney General and others testifying to the national epidemic of violence, which annually claims more than fifty-five thousand lives, killing as many young men as car accidents, cancer, and heart disease combined. Yet the most intense anger displayed at the conference was not against violence in the streets but against violence in the media.

There is ample evidence, of course, that violence in the media has an impact, but there is also ample disagreement over how much of an impact. Whatever the precise effect may be, Marshall says, the felons and gang members he works with get partly "programmed by the negative images from the media." The goods advertised, the clothes worn, the words spat out, the random violence—all help seduce young people, and particularly young people with few positive role models, he says. Marshall is well aware that he is not alone in his concern. There are indications that the public is fed up. A recent Times Mirror poll shows that seven out of ten Americans are unhappy about the negative images that the media are conjuring up, and call them excessively violent. At the conference, several of the participants became so agitated as they swapped tales of how the media polluted young minds with violence that they seemed to be flirting with notions of censorship, just as Congress and the Attorney General seem to have been doing ever since. A few people said that they intended to storm their local TV stations and demand, on behalf of the people, that the media present more positive news.

IF a program like "Street Soldiers" constitutes one successful attempt to curb violence, what else might unhappy citizens do that would stop short of censorship yet help protect their kids? Over the years, various types of protest have swayed the entertainment industry. In 1989, for instance, a letter-writing campaign by private citizens and nurses' organizations caused advertisers to shun NBC's "Nightingales"—a salacious series about student nurses, produced by Aaron Spelling—to the point where the network ignored the show's ratings, which were respectable, and cancelled it. In 1990, Congress passed the Television Violence Act, which this summer had the belated effect of causing the four broadcast networks and fifteen of the cable networks to agree to voluntarily affix a label to any program they deemed violent. These pressures raised the consciousness of programmers.

Though Congress and the Attorney General may not recognize it as such, consciousness-raising is at the heart of what they are now doing to save the media from their herd instinct. Some coöperative, and confrontational, steps that community groups and parents might take without doing harm to the Bill of Rights could be patterned after "Street Soldiers." The show came into being when a private citizen, Hammer, approached KMEL and insisted, in the face of skepticism, that a talk show about violence would attract not only youthful listeners but also advertisers; as he predicted, the show has been commercially successful.

Joe Marshall had another experience in San Francisco that could be duplicated elsewhere. In early 1988, after the San Francisco TV stations repeatedly broadcast footage of black youths heaving stones at buses, there was an outpouring of citizen complaint. In response, Harry Fuller, then the news director at the local ABC affiliate, KGO, sent a reporter to do a series on the Omega Boys Club. Marshall guesses that the series resulted in thirty thousand dollars in individual donations. (The club's annual budget is four hundred and seventy thousand dollars, from private and corporate donors—none of it from the government—and two-thirds of it is earmarked for college scholarships.)

Fuller also invited Marshall in for a visit to begin a dialogue on press coverage of the city's minority communities. Marshall came, and, rather than berating the news media, he quietly suggested that by reporting on black people only when there was an uprising or a crime news organizations were not presenting a full or fair picture of the community. Marshall was bumping into a truth about local-TV newsrooms: news directors and producers are generally young, inexperienced, wedded to familiar stories that take place within easy travelling distance of the studio, fearful for their job security if their ratings should fall, and often ignorant about the cities in which they work. Most producers do not aspire to blood-and-guts journalism. What they want is predictable stories: the latest crisis at City Hall, the newest murder, the fate of the local team, and, of course, the weather. Few news directors have intimate knowledge of community-based organizations, or of good things done in their cities which are not announced at City Hall. Fuller assured Marshall that KGO would try to get beyond stereotypical reporting.

Another useful tool to restrain violence in the media relies on peer pressure, which is a potent weapon in all groups: editors might suggest that their writers—especially their TV and movie and press critics—focus on pointing out unnecessary violence in all media. Dennis A. Britton, the editor of the Chicago *Sun-Times*, said at the Washington conference on violence that he met weekly with gang members, and added that he had come to the conference because, as editor-in-chief of a major urban daily, he had to have a broad understanding of an issue that confronted him every day. Britton has the power to issue orders, to enforce a code of ethics among his employees, and also to create peer pressure.

An innovative approach to violence is already being taken by the San Antonio branch of Fighting Back, a national drug-abuse-prevention program sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Under the leadership of Beverly Watts Davis, a charismatic black woman, who described its efforts at the conference in Washington, San Antonio Fighting Back has organized "freedom fighters" for safe neighborhoods. Armed only with video cameras, community teams have filmed drug dealers and turned the videotaped evidence over to the police, and the result has been the closing of what Davis said was

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Another potentially potent approach is being championed by Jesse Jackson, who has recruited Bill Cosby to lead what Jackson calls a national crusade aimed at both the media and the callous behavior of young people. More blacks under the age of twenty-one have been killed in New York City this year, Jackson told the New York *Post*—three hundred and sixty-two—"than all those who were lynched this century."

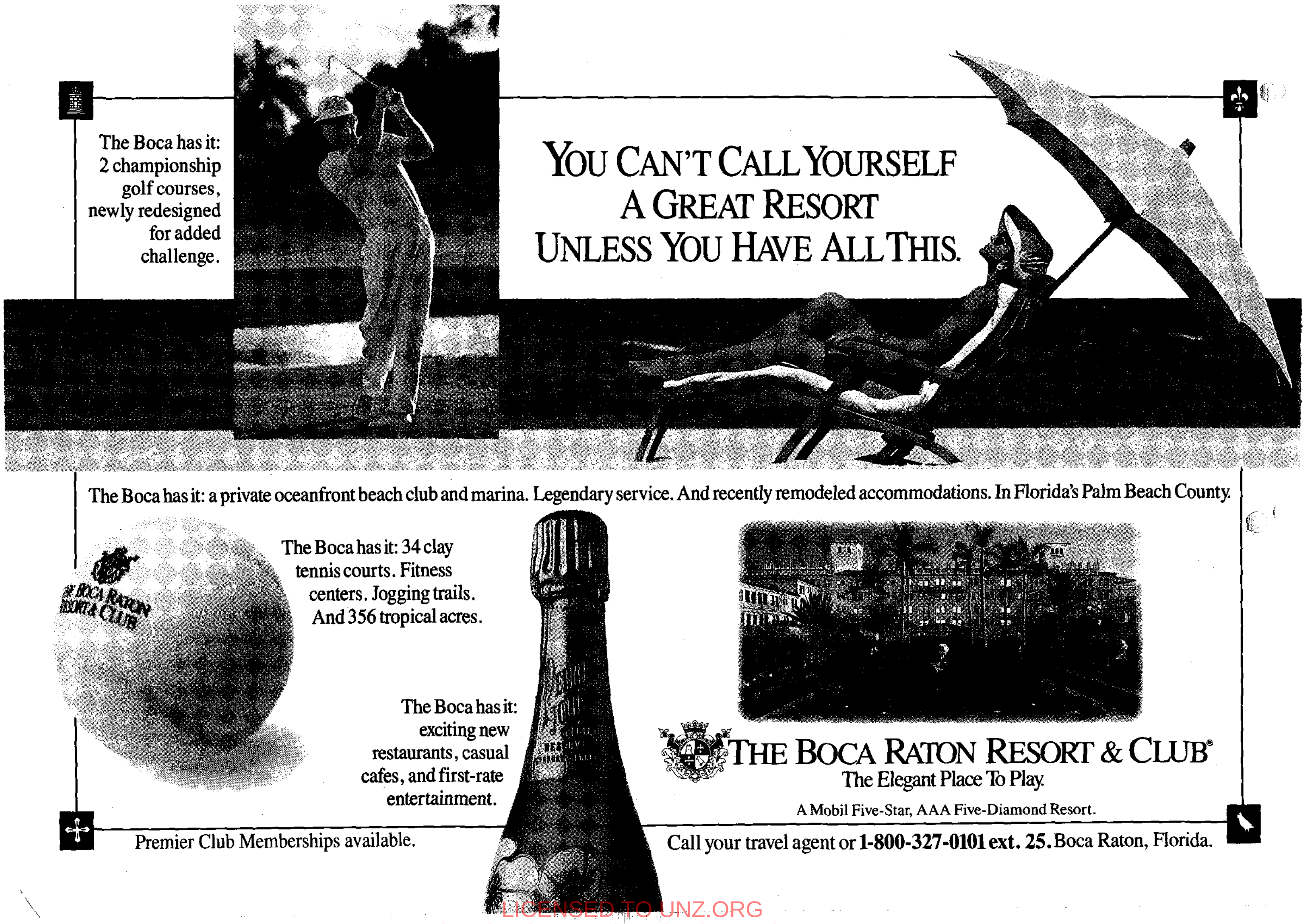
The courts also offer citizens a forum. In France, for instance, a mother has filed suit against the head of the state-run TV channel that carried the American TV series "MacGyver." She claims that her son was accidentally killed in 1992 as a result of copying MacGyver's recipe for making a bomb. In the litigious culture of the United States, similar lawsuits are bound to become a weapon against violence, though they may also constitute a threat to free speech. Boycotts of advertisers are another aggressive, and potentially dangerous, form of public pressure. This weapon seems to be viewed kindly by Attorney General Reno; in her speech at the Washington conference, she said, "Let's start sending clear messages to the television networks. Let's tell advertisers that we're not going to buy their products if they continue to support violence on television."

One thing parents can do to control what their children watch on television is to install devices called V-chips in all sets, as Representative Markey has proposed. Such chips would allow parents to block the signal of any show rated violent.

Further legislative action is possible, too, including three Senate bills that would apply to cable as well as broadcast outlets: one would limit the hours during which programs deemed violent may air; a second would require the F.C.C. to issue a "report card" four times a year for all broadcast and cable outlets, rating each as to its violent content; and a third would require that violence warnings be posted at the beginning of and during each show rated violent. "The regulation of violence is constitutionally permissible," Reno testified before the Senate Commerce Committee, on October 20th, during a hearing on the three bills. If the entertainment industry didn't reduce the violent content of its products, she said, legislative action would be "imperative." Reno, like Marshall and others who want to change the way the media deal with violence, bases her argument on two assumptions: that the media are a public trust, and that this trust includes being responsible for more than just entertaining consumers.

"We have to hold the media responsible for being educators, whether they want to be or not," Ronald G. Slaby, a senior scientist at the Educational Development Center, in Newton, Massachusetts, told me. "Let's use television the right way—to send the message that problems need to be understood and dealt with, not 'solved' or 'glorified' with further violence," Reno said at the Washington conference.

Of course, it is easier to exhort than to bring about change. Is it realistic to assume, as Reno does, that there is one "right way" to use television? Should the media think of themselves as local or national parents? Should government compel them to? Would legislation or strictures that are meant to prod the media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end up suffocating independence and creativity? Will pressure panic cautious advertisers into abandoning innovative but controversial shows, such as Steven Bochco's "NYPD Blue"? If the public is dead set against violence and prurience, how is it that people clamor to see the Amy Fisher TV movies or manage to propel Howard Stern's book to the top of the best-seller list? Because the networks are such large and agreeable targets, Washington often treats them as the chief culprits. With the exception of their own stations' local newscasts and racier magazine shows, there is actually less violence on broadcast TV today than there was, say, a decade ago. Which begs this question: Will the proliferation of channel choices result in more violence, more "blue programs," an anything-goes climate in a medium no longer dependent on mass audiences and therefore freed from any need to meet the community-standards test that has traditionally satisfied advertisers?

The conflict between commerce and politics also raises questions. One reason that voluntary agreements have not worked in the past is that the commercial interests of broadcasters have vied with their political interests. The motive for much of the violence in movies, on television, and elsewhere, according to Richard D. Heffner, the chairman of the motion-picture industry's Classification and Rating Administration, is not mindless but purposeful. Violence and sex sell, he told me in an interview in his office on Sixth Avenue. "They know exactly what they're doing," he said. "The major factor is the bottom line. And the bottom line is not a good society, a society that nurtures the rules we more or less live by, but one where you maximize your profits today."

After nineteen years as chairman of the motion-picture-ratings board, Heffner barely disguised his disgust at what the moviemakers have kept churning out. His committee screened and rated six hundred and forty-six films last year, and despite the growing public distaste for violence and the consequent desire of Hollywood producers for PG ratings, he declared, he had so far seen no evidence of a lessening of violence in R-rated films. Television and studio executives, he suggested, are more interested in labels than they are in controlling the content of the program or movie that is labelled. Instead of voluntary agreements to label, he would like to see entertainment executives agree to limit violence and sex. "I'm talking about limiting," he said. "We're talking about wretched excess. If you and I sat in front of a television, we'd agree on what is wretched excess. Just as we could tell the difference on the screen between fucking and making love."

There is a school of optimists who believe that the interests of commerce and politics are moving closer. Mark Canton, the chairman of Columbia Pictures, said in a speech last winter, "A movie rated PG is almost three times more likely to reach a hundred million dollars than a film rated R. And yet, as an industry, we are making more R-rated films than ever: fifty-eight per cent of all movies. At the same time, the number of PG-rated films has been dropping." The smart thing to do, he added, is to make more PG films.

Heffner, who is sixty-eight and plans to step down when his contract expires, next June, is pessimistic. He knows that the studios and the directors he battles with daily do not always agree on what is wretched excess, and that they want to convert an R to a PG-13 rating without toning down the violence. Unfortunately, while PG ratings may make good business sense domestically, a different business logic applies worldwide, where movies with violence or sexual themes travel better.

These are not uncomplicated matters; they are accompanied by real doubts and dangers. But what often gets lost in the tumult of questions raised by those in the media who want to focus only on the perils of censorship is the fundamental question asked by the voluntary movie-ratings system: Is this something that a child of eight—or thirteen—should see? "Why do civilized human beings have to get into a debate about whether garbage is garbage or not?" Heffner asks. "It doesn't matter if you as an adult think it's gratuitous. The question is: What about your child?"

In a culture increasingly cluttered with entertainment choices, the aim of those in the media—ranging from Madonna to Bochco, from producers to editors—is to do things that stand out. This aim collides with the public's aim, which is to protect impressionable children. At a time when parents and others are agitated by an onslaught of media violence, much of what stands out, as Congress and Janet Reno now remind us, makes an inviting target. ♦

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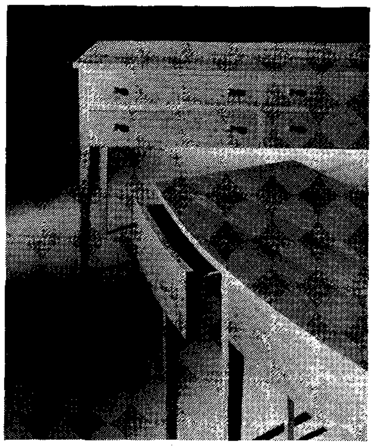

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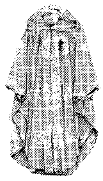


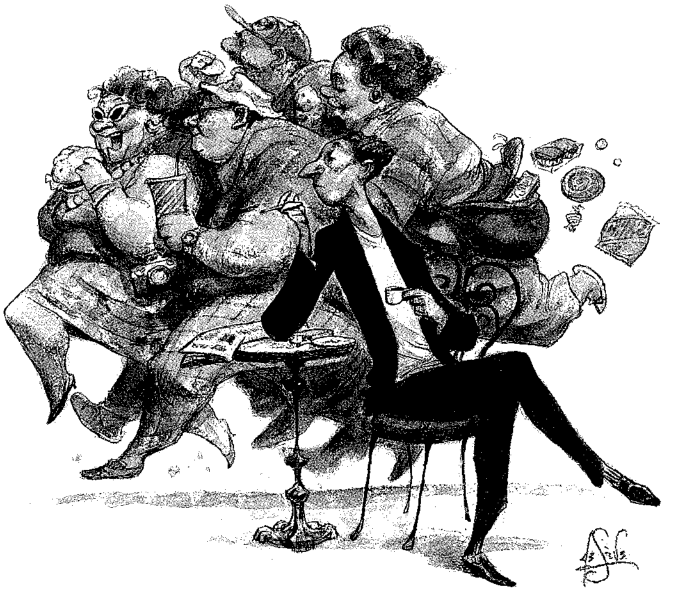
POSTCARD FROM ITALY

SIT ON IT

The Yankee credo of bigger is better seems to have backfired as the Ugly American gives way to the Global Glutton.

BY ANDREA LEE

FOR years, I have been engaged in a lonely battle in my life overseas, an unsung, selfless crusade to preserve the honor of my country. With little regard for personal safety, I have tried to convince citizens of the rest of the world that we Americans are not the fattest people on the planet. Often, betrayed by my own side, I'm tempted to give up the fight. Three times in the last month—once in Paris, and twice in my adopted city of Milan—I've encountered groups of tourists who I fervently hoped were from Canada or England or Germany or Australia. Not that they were noisy or ill-behaved; on the contrary, they displayed an agreeable decorum and a docile interest in their surroundings as they trotted along in their shorts and sports visors. It was what was in those shorts that alarmed me: pounds and pounds and pounds, wobbling in rhythm to an unmistakable national energy. "Ah, there it is again," remarked an Italian friend who was with me at one of these encounters; she has lived in New York and Florida, and spoke as if she'd caught a glimpse of a familiar landmark. "There it is—the monumental American backside!"


PETER DE SÈVE

Coming from an Italian, this witticism had a particular sting, since I, like most people born in the United States in the fifties (and here I should probably note that I am neither thin nor fat, and—happily—have never been obsessed by weight), grew up with the conviction that Italians were decidedly more corpulent than Americans. At the sexy end of the spectrum were Loren and Lollobrigida; in the middle was the Italian ur-mother of the spaghetti ads, Mamma Mia; and at the far end loomed certain Fellini extras.

The truth is, however, that after seven years of living in Italy I have seen very few overweight Italians. On the other hand, observing tour groups and looking around during my visits home to the States, I've seen ever more distinctly obese Americans, of all colors and creeds—including Italian-Americans, a fact that lays to rest any nature-versus-nurture questions. From Italy, I travel often to the rest of Europe and to Asia, and on my travels I've noticed that our national image appears to have shifted from Ugly American—an epithet that, say what you will, had its own barbarian charm—to Global Glutton. When we travel nowadays, we are politer and more environmentally conscious than many other nationalities; the only thing we pollute is the view.

Of course, how and why a country fleshes out is itself meat for historians. Eating patterns spring from the muddle of economics, local character, and acts of God known collectively as the destiny of nations. Italy, a country that has gone from rags to largely illicit riches in the last fifty years and is now the scene of a political maelstrom that makes most banana republics seem sedate, has through every recent change maintained the tradition of close-knit families who live—and eat—together. Joined to this tradition is a limitless interest in food—quality, quirks, preparation—that is something between a national sport and a religion.

Italians, northern or southern, talk about food all the time but rarely about cholesterol or calories. (I've also seen little sign of the eating disorders that are the dark flip side of obesity in the United States.) They have coffee in the morning and two full meals later on, usually eaten *in famiglia*. Italians of the most varied occupations and social status come home for lunch; up and down the peninsula at the stroke of one rolls a seismic creaking of tables as ponderous tureens of pasta and risotto are set out, to be followed by meat and a vegetable, and fruit. This is usually prepared by a stay-at-home mother, or by another female member of the extended family. (The phenomenon of Ladies Who Lunch is not manifest in Italy, because even the richest ladies would never think of abandoning their families at midday.) A similar scene takes place at dinner, which is always at eight.

As a result of these two substantial, emphatically regular meals, Italians have little use for snacks. Snacking is a form of alimentary anarchy propagated in the Western world by the Earl of Sandwich and refined into a high art form in the United States, where it is responsible for many inches of the national derrière. The link to our history is clear: as the frontier vanished and opportunities for Jeffersonian self-expression diminished, Americans turned to lawless eating to indulge a general urge for freedom and to sever lingering patriarchal/matriarchal bonds to the repressive mealtime routines of moribund Old World cultures. To summarize: Our prairies dwindled and our bottoms expanded.

All this occurs to me anew when I visit my family, in Philadelphia (arriving, like most expatriates of that glorious city, with an acute soft-pretzel deficiency), and become aware that in my absence the vast undergrowth of American snack foods has sprouted hundreds of baroque offshoots. These are generally sweet or salty, soft or crisp variations on a mysterious primal snack substance (a sort of chocolate-raspberry-mousse nacho) that by its nature provokes infantile desires and promotes daylong grazing. I've observed that my family and friends consider eating not only an act to be accomplished on its own but also an appropriate accompaniment to many other activities: watching television, driving, desk work. In Italy, it is rare to see people eating on the street; in America, the only activities presumably not accompanied by a counterpoint of victuals are sex and sleep.

Another problem is that food in the States is in spirit both Darwinian and Protestant—in eternal evolution toward a point of maximum virtue, or fitness, or consumer appeal. If a product cannot be made better, it can at least be made bigger. My Italian friend said that when she lived in the United States she felt she created difficulty if she asked for a small or an unadorned hamburger or plate of shrimp; everybody seemed to find it only right that she would want the big or extra-fancy version.

In Italy, bigness is not necessarily synonymous with excellence in food, and the only time one sees the word "extra" is on bottles of *extra vergine* olive oil. Here, there is little desire to improve on something—a tomato, a vinegar, a type of bread—that might have been deemed satisfying for generations, even centuries. It all has to do with an attitude that is as conservative as the Vatican—one that generally deems praiseworthy any form of status quo. This attitude springs from a culture that, despite a thousand superficial changes, still does not reject the idea of people living as their parents lived.

As sages insist on informing us, however, all ironies eventually come to pass. Our own staunch American idealism has for years been nagging us about our national bloat (are we not, paradoxically, the ones who inflicted body cultism on the rest of the world?), and one of the saner remedial proposals of the last decade is the so-called Mediterranean diet; another fairly recent ideal is closer-knit families who eat actual meals together. Meanwhile, in Italy, along with Burger King, Häagen-Dazs, and McDonald's has arrived a tidal wave of crisps and crunches and microwave dinners. Things have hardly reached the point where these novelties substitute for the two canonical collations, but in obscure corners of the bigger cities such things are not unheard of. Perhaps in the next millennium we Americans, shapely, chic, and family-oriented, will watch hordes of fat Italian tourist backsides wobble by. We'll smile complacently as we help ourselves to some pasta.◆

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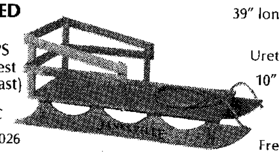

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PROFILE

AN AFRIKANER DANTE

No one elevated the Boer language to such pure beauty and no one wielded it so devastatingly against the apartheid regime as its exiled poet Breyten Breytenbach—until his rage turned to disaster. His new memoirs show him still consumed by a South Africa that, despite its transformation, remains his vision of both Heaven and Hell.

BY LAWRENCE WESCHLER

I ONCE asked Breyten Breytenbach, the exiled South African poet and painter, why, in his opinion, after the fiasco of his clandestine return to his homeland, in 1975, the calamity of his arrest, and the debacle of his trial, recantations, and sentencing, the authorities who allowed him to go on writing in prison nevertheless forbade him to paint. At the time, we were sitting in Breytenbach's airy, light-drenched studio, in Paris. (He had been released in 1982, a year and a half short of the completion of a nine-year term, and had immediately returned to his Paris exile.) We had been looking through a life's worth of canvases, dazzlingly colorful paintings with surreal images by turns lyrical and profoundly unsettling. He paused for a moment to think about the question, then said, "They weren't stupid. I think they must have realized that for me an empty canvas would have been an open field of freedom—and they weren't going to allow me that."

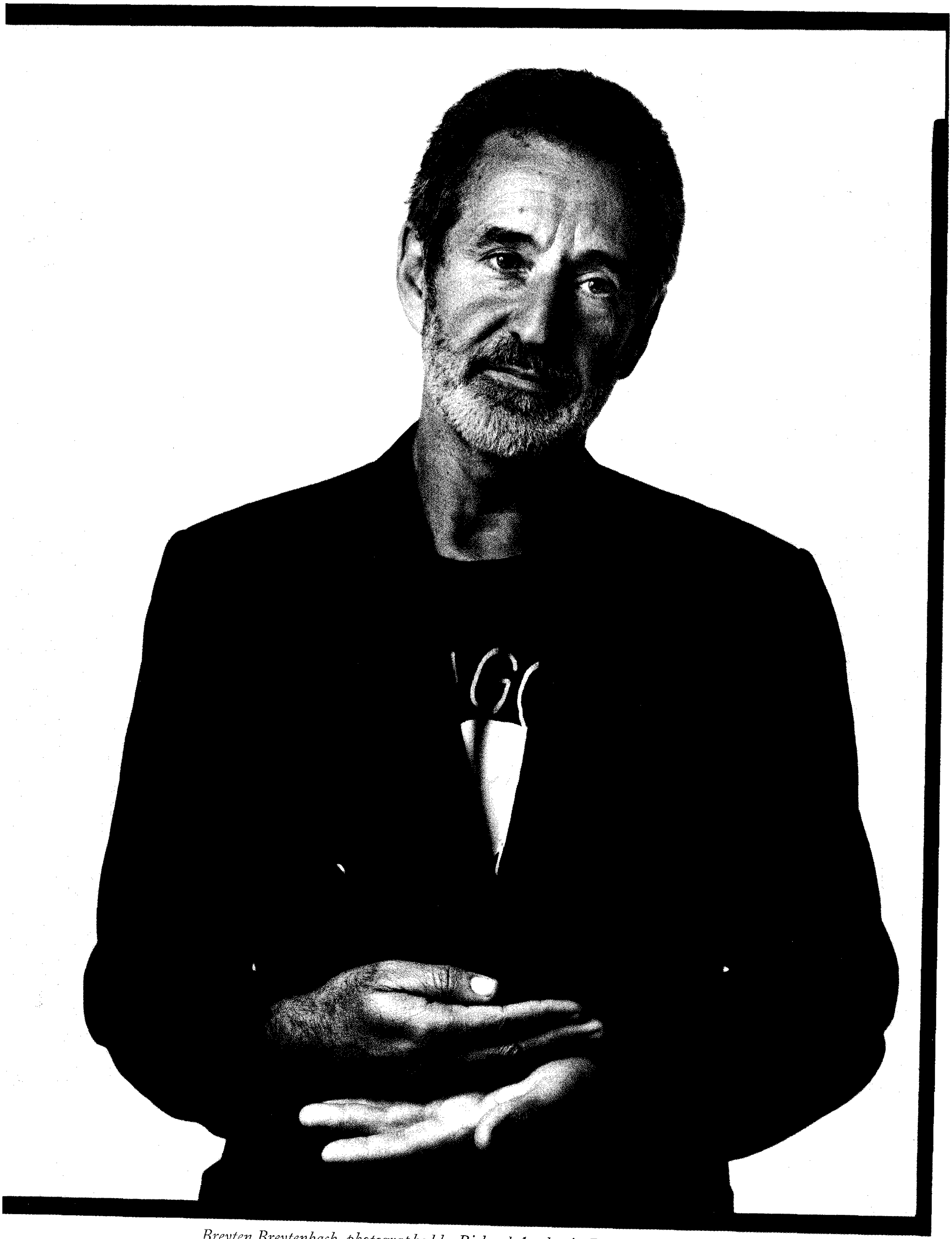
They wouldn't let him paint, and for years they barely allowed him even to see any colors. This quintessential colorist had fallen into a nightmare universe of monochrome grays and browns and goose-shit greens. ("*Caca d'oie*," he had commented earlier. "That's the term the French have for the predominant color of prison life.") The pressure within him to paint—or to create images, at least—had become almost overwhelming, and finally he had managed to create and smuggle out to his wife, in Paris, a few dozen drawings. She had preserved them, and some of them were among the pictures we'd been looking at. Several seemed to derive from the tumultuous cauldron of his interior life—images of decapitation, copulation, mutilation, and confinement—but others, almost as if in compensation, seemed to be exercises in minute observation: a scuffed shoe, a folded blanket, a draped jacket, a burned note and the extinguished match. Somehow, these modest images were more affecting than the imagined ones, and perhaps the most haunting of all was a drawing entitled "The Orange, Four Times," which portrayed, first, an orange whole (its very *orangeness*, shining through the pencil gray, in some ways seeming to be the drawing's incantatory subtext), then the orange partly peeled, then the orange three-quarters eaten (that is, with just a few last sections to be seen), and then—well, nothing (empty air, the orange consumed).

That drawing reminded me of a painting we had been looking at earlier—one of a series that Breytenbach completed during the first years after his release. Against a lush orange-colored background Breytenbach had created what he was calling "A Family Portrait," which was in fact a group self-portrait, three images of himself at different ages: as a poor young farm boy, a mischievous glint in his eye; as a clean-shaven, manacled prisoner in a blue jacket, putting on a brave face for the photographers at his first trial; and as he saw himself at the moment of painting—squinting through crossed eyes, prematurely aged (at least in his own mind), his black beard frosted with gray.

IT'S often said of Breytenbach (particularly by his American publishers and reviewers) that he comes from a "distinguished" Afrikaner family. It's true that his forebears date back virtually to the Cape Colony's founding. (Breyten insists that those forebears, as is the case with almost all longtime Afrikaner families, their protestations notwithstanding, included slaves as well as masters.) But his own family, at the time of his birth in 1939 into a South Africa still mired in the Depression, was hardly "distinguished," and might better have been characterized as just a few rungs above a South African version of "poor white trash." Breyten was the third son, born seven years after the first, Jan, and six after the second, Cloete. (He was a twin, but the other twin died at birth. A fourth brother and a sister eventually rounded out the family.) Jan and Cloete can still recall their father's labors as an itinerant worker, scraping together a subsistence living on a crew digging an irrigation canal while they and their mother pitched a tent each night in nearby fields.

During Breyten's own early years, his father did manage to acquire a succession of small farms in the Boland region, east of Cape Town, but he must have been having a hard go of it (Breyten recalls that his father was drinking a good deal in those days), and presently he had to give up farming and move back closer to Cape Town—to the small town of Wellington. There the family ran a combination general store and boarding house called Grevilleas, just on the wrong side of the tracks (most of the customers at the general store were "colored"), prophetically situated between a library and a police station.

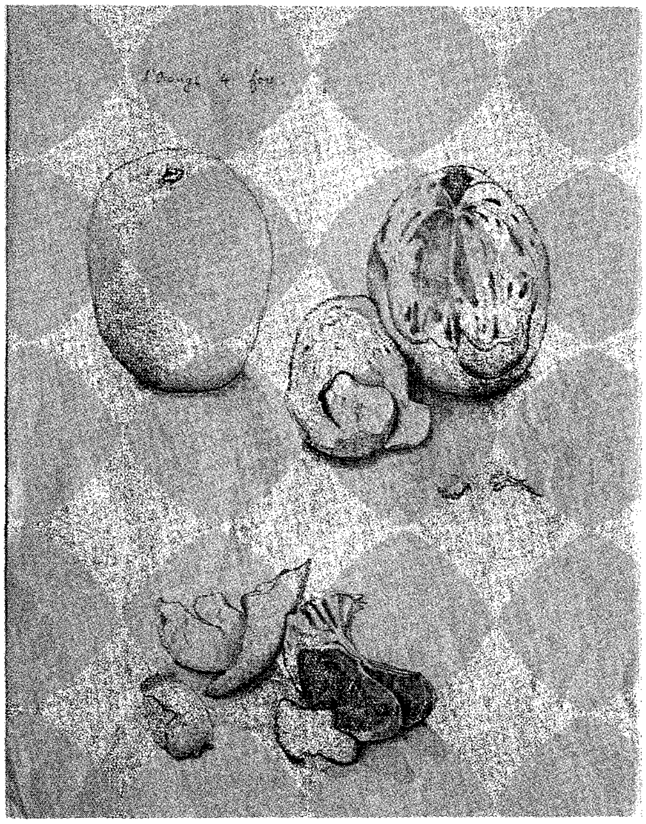
Breyten never laments the circumstances of his upbringing. ("For one thing, we were all—everybody in that region—poor in those days," he says.) On the contrary, he seems to cherish every moment of it, and those memories feed the wellspring of his creativity in painting, poetry, and prose. A fine sense of how the memories get filtered through the medium of Breytenbach's sensibility can be gauged from some of the early, rhapsodic pages in his memoir "A Season in Paradise," written in 1973 (the first volume of a trilogy that is achieving completion this month with the publication, by Harcourt Brace, of



Breyten Breytenbach, photographed by Richard Avedon in Paris, May 20, 1993.

his "Return to Paradise"). In one passage he recalls his family's old blue Mercury, with its rumble seat, and how, one evening, returning from a band concert, "I tumbled out of my little seat just like a ball of dung released by a horse in full gallop, and broke my neck in two places." The account goes on, "In the dark, no one had noticed my fall, and when they found me three days later, I was already dead and decaying and with the baby Jesus. My mother was very sad." In case the reader thinks that he may have misread this passage, the very next page describes a resurrected Breyten playing in a neighboring professor's yard, falling into a fishpond, and being nibbled into oblivion by a swarm of ravenous goldfish; and a few pages after that, young Breyten gets sliced and diced by a passing plow ("So that my head was just left lying there loose to one side. Thus my bloodsoaked little body was decapitated, lifeless"). Of course, one of the things that make these darkly whimsical pirouettes so affecting is the way they seem retrospectively prophetic of—almost rehearsals for—the real-life disaster and ensuing entombment which the author was so relentlessly approaching.

Wellington, where Breyten spent his adolescence, is just a few kilometres away from Paarl, a town that is cherished in Afrikaner iconography as the birthplace of "the Taal," the Afrikaans language itself; and some people argue that Breytenbach's special feeling for Afrikaans arises, in part, from the fact of his having been brought up in the language's very cradle. Breytenbach himself cites other inspirations for his literary vocation—specifically, his mother. Although the Breytenbach family was run, in typical Afrikaner fashion, as a patriarchy, it was the mother who seems to have left the greater impression on the children—or, at least, on Breyten. She was, he has told me, "intensely uncomplicated." While his father was dour and sombre, occasionally almost despondent, she immersed their modest digs in color and systematically refused to get depressed: difficulties (no matter how momentarily vexing) simply had to be solvable. But mainly she liked to talk. (Breyten's brother Cloete once told me, "That woman, let's face it, the lady suffered from verbal diarrhea. I tell you, her whole family, they'd get together and yak and yak, play their music, and yak some more, all bloody day.") When Breyten cites his mother as an influence, he is probably referring to the specific quality of that talk: its wildly leaping, continually unexpected free-associative character, and its tendency to fill a space—qualities that also apply to Breytenbach's poetics.



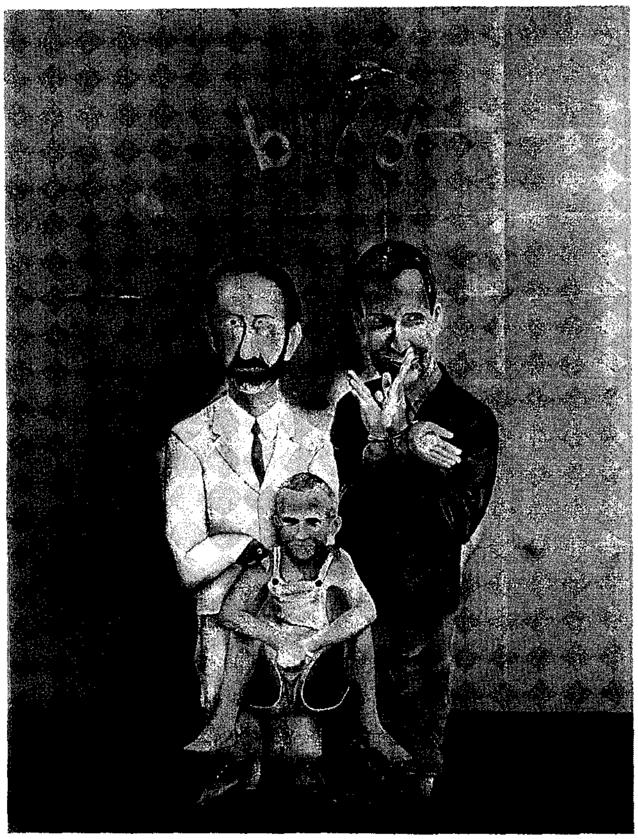
"The Orange, Four Times," Pretoria Central prison, 1976.

Even if the Breytenbach clan wasn't exactly "distinguished" in terms of its circumstances, it proved immensely accomplished, certainly in terms of Breyten's own generation, among whose members Breyten was by no means the only standout. Cloete, the second son, became a widely published photojournalist, who specialized in scenes of war carnage and devastation, ranging from Vietnam through the Yom Kippur War, but most often across the African continent. Over and over, people I met on my recent trip to South Africa assured me that Cloete's reach was so wide and so seemingly effortless that he had to be a government security agent or, at least, a close collaborator with the propaganda services—charges that he explicitly denies, as he denies any paid relationship of any sort with the apartheid regime. Such disavowals notwithstanding, he certainly projects an aura: his first wife was a niece of the head of the state security service; and Cloete was often described to me as "a shadowy figure" or "a spooky guy." ("You just kept very quiet when he was around," one former parliamentarian said. "You watched your tongue, because you just sensed everything you said was being reported back.") His production often dovetailed nicely with the regime's current line, and though he claims not to have believed in apartheid per se, he was and, in a sense, remains a true believer in the apartheid regime's nineteen-seventies doctrine of the "total onslaught": the existence of a worldwide Communist conspiracy aimed at bringing the South African government down through both internal subterfuge and revolutionary upheaval in all the neighboring countries—which, in turn, justified an all-out response. Cloete readily acknowledges having close ties to sources inside the South African military, but he insists that those ties have been like any other journalist's, explaining that he's just good at what he does.

Still, what ties! For the oldest Breytenbach brother, Jan, just happens to be the most decorated soldier in the history of the contemporary South African Defense Force. Wounded in battle seven times, he has fought all over Africa—in Biafra and Rhodesia and Mozambique, and especially in Angola and Namibia—and has not only fought but created entire fighting units. He founded the S.A.D.F.'s first reconnaissance, or special-forces, unit; he also created the S.A.D.F.'s most highly celebrated and deeply feared parachute brigade, the Forty-fourth; and, in between—and most famous of all, perhaps—during the mid-seventies he fashioned almost single-handedly the fearsome 32 Battalion, also known as the Buffalo Battalion, forging it, for the most part, out of the suddenly disenfranchised black irregulars, former collaborators, or partisans from defeated factions, all left over following Portugal's colonial collapse in Angola. In "They Live by the Sword," one of Jan's two books chronicling the history of that battalion, he is quite frank about the rationale for creating such a force: "It was politically far more expedient for a foreign black Angolan to be killed in a battle defending South Africa than it was for a white national serviceman to die." And yet he goes on to maintain that the blacks in 32 Battalion were not considered mere cannon fodder, at least by him, and it is true that the unit was renowned for the tendency of its white leaders to fight alongside their black troops at the forefront of any battle, in the process sustaining far higher casualty rates among white officers than other such units in the S.A.D.F.

Jan Breytenbach figured prominently in many of the most famous battles in South Africa's cross-border campaigns—great victories, to hear the South Africans tell it, or "appalling massacres," to hear the verdict of many of the regime's opponents (and of such independent watchdogs as the World Council of Churches, the United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Refugees, and the World Health Organization)—and yet he himself was no enthusiastic Afrikaner nationalist. Early in his career, he enlisted in the air wing of Britain's Royal Navy (a decidedly un-Boerish thing to do), was present at Suez and served during "the Malay Emergency," returning to South Africa only in 1961 (with a British wife), after the Republic of South Africa decided to sever its ties with the British Commonwealth. He often claimed to despise the apartheid system, and maintained that race consciousness had no place in his own units. But he hated Communism even more than apartheid, and, buttressed by such ironclad certainty, he may have done as much as any other one person to assure the prolongation of apartheid.

And yet Breyten, for his part, doesn't buy the anti-Communist rationale—or, anyway, doesn't see it as his brother's fundamental motivation. "The anti-Communist stuff came later, and really just served as a kind of overlay," he says. Rather, Breyten looks upon Jan's development as more of a generational matter—a romantic dreamer of a child in thrall to news accounts of the Second World War. (Montgomery was Jan's first hero, and tanks were his first passion.) "He lost himself in fantasies of the military life—the manliness of it, its physical and spiritual demands, its glorification of an élite that was at the same time an élite of rogues, the lonely ones, those highly trained, wild-eyed, long-haired killers. A love of being wild and being in the wild. I think that if he had come to maturity just a bit later he might have become a game warden; a big set piece in his legend has to do with his having personally tamed three lions and a leopard."



"A Family Portrait," Paris, 1985.

NOT that the emergence of a political firebrand like Breyten Breytenbach from such an environment makes much more sense. Actually, Breyten's eventual opposition to apartheid and his general propensity for radical political engagement might well be understood—as in the case of his brother—as an overlay on previous tendencies. In Breyten's case, at least as he now understands himself, the artistic impulse preceded the political.

Like most Afrikaner youths, Breyten regularly attended church—of the Dutch Reformed hellfire-and-damnation variety (his father served as an elder)—but he gradually fell away. "God just didn't talk to me," he says. What did speak to him, and overwhelmingly, was art—poetry, painting, and music. "And in that kind of macho environment those were simply interests you weren't supposed to have if you were a boy, if you wanted to become a man," he once said to me. "I began to feel increasingly marginalized. And from feeling oneself marginalized it's only a small step to beginning to question the values of your society. I mean, nobody at that age is going to accept himself as a marginal case. There must be something wrong with the society when it puts you on the sidelines like that."

Marginal though Breyten may have been, he excelled as a student, graduating as valedictorian from Wellington's Hugenoot High School. He would be the first in his family line to attend university, and yet, shockingly, he declined a full fellowship to the "Afrikaner Oxford," the University of Stellenbosch, opting instead to attend the Michaelis School of Art, at the English-speaking University of Cape Town. He enrolled there in 1958, and found himself one of the very few Afrikaners in his class.

Invigorating as art school proved to be, Breyten was even more entranced by Cape Town itself. "How alive the Mother City used to be before fascist political engineers and other black-shoed Broederbond planners destroyed it," he recalls of those days, the late fifties, in "Return to Paradise," and he goes on to cite the exuberantly cosmopolitan and pluralistic makeup of this "Alexandria in the southern Atlantic." Breyten drank it all in. Evenings he spent in jazz clubs, or tracking down the luminaries of an earlier generation of Afrikaner poets. He steeped himself in Kafka and Kierkegaard, in Fraser and Graves, but especially in the new Beat literature (Kerouac and Ginsberg, for example, were just emerging) and in works on Eastern mysticism. "Like a head of cabbage, I grew rapidly," Breyten subsequently recalled of that year. "But, like a head of cabbage in shallow earth, I, too, was probably more air than leaf."

It was at this time that Breyten began to get politicized. In 1958 and 1959, the National Party regime—firmly ensconced after a decade in power—really began to apply the screws of its apartheid policies to the country's universities, excluding all blacks from institutions with a majority of whites; blacks had previously constituted twelve per cent of the University of Cape Town student body. Breyten joined campus protests against the exclusions, spent long nights discussing the situation with his housemates, and began receiving visits from the police.

The politics of his homeland were drawing him in, but they weren't the only draw. The more worldly his exposures became, the more he longed for exposure to the rest of the world. After a year and a half, Breyten dropped out of school and, without seeking his parents' approval (he knew they would never give it) or saying so much as a goodbye, he booked a fourth-class passage on a Portuguese cattle boat and, rucksack on his back and twenty pounds in his pocket, headed north for Europe, and specifically for what he called "the honey pot" of Paris.

MY HERITAGE

(*Pollsmoor Prison, 1979*)

"your grandpa"
says my father resting
before the light at the window
his head a dark songbird snared
in the oversized collar
"your grandpa was a farmer

"not all that—er—successful
since he went plowing and planting
in never-never land and was hardly—er—
dexterous with his hands
but *peu importe*

"in the old days night fell anyway
before anyone could choose his way

"his farm ran down the Fish River
(ah I see again the banks buttocking
steep and lush and blue before me)
but he was a profoundly god-carrying man
a Buddhist—er—or of some other
obscure creed

'Sundays his house teemed black with prayer-people

"with his hands deep in the good clods
your grandpa
died of poverty
but *this*—er—and *this*
he left to you":

with his voice my father reaches for
and caresses the heavenly spheres
and the sun a hill on fire
mountains with their rumpled cheeks clean acres
flowers humankind even canes wound
with snakes:

"*all this priceless dictionary!*"

—BREYTEN BREYTENBACH
(*Translated, from the Afrikaans, by the author.*)

BREYTEN arrived in Paris in the winter of 1961. It was a difficult arrival. "My efforts at making money, as events in later life were to bear out, could not be described as being particularly successful," he told the court at his trial, in 1975, "and it goes without saying that I immediately started yearning for the fleshpots of South Africa." After a year of bumming around, he would probably have returned home, as he had originally intended, except that instead he met Yolande.

Ngo Thi Hoâng Liên Yolande Bubi was the beautiful nineteen-year-old daughter of a Vietnamese widow who had brought her entire family to Paris soon after the Second World War, so that they could benefit from a classic French education. Yolande was four at the time—and, like Breyten, the middle child in a swarm of siblings—and the family was among the first Vietnamese to live in the capital. When she and Breyten met, in 1962, she was still living at home. On the streets of Paris and in the classrooms of the Sorbonne, her life was entirely French and cosmopolitan, while at home it was entirely Vietnamese and traditional. They fell passionately in love, and within three months they were married. Back in South Africa, Breyten's father initially expressed misgivings, but his mother deferred to her son's heart from the very start and immediately began including little notes in English to Yolande at the end of her letters to Breyten. "It was only much later that I came to appreciate how truly radical that was," Yolande says.

They moved into a tiny two-room flat on the Left Bank. Breyten converted one room into a painting studio, and

Yolande headed off each morning to an office job to support his art. Breyten began creating perverse, fetid northern imagery in lavish, Matissean colors. The work, by turns dreamlike and fevered, whimsical and crass, involuted and blatant, began to garner a certain reputation in Paris, but even more of one in Amsterdam. Meanwhile, he was writing as well—"Constantly," Yolande recalls, "across every stray scrap of paper"—poetry and brief, surreal prose narratives, in Afrikaans. One day, he showed a few samples to a visiting Afrikaner poet, and the poet insisted on taking them back to South Africa. Within a year after that—in 1964, at age twenty-five—Breyten was making a dazzling double début with a book of poetry and another of short prose pieces.

From the beginning, his voice was both startlingly assured and oddly self-alienated. The first poem in his first book begins with an almost Brechtian displacement. It is dedicated "For B. Breytenbach," and, in the translation of Denis Hirson, it launches out (in italics): *"Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce you to Breyten Breytenbach, / the lean man in the green sweater; he is devout / and braces and hammers his oblong head / to fabricate a poem for you, for example . . ."* There follows a poem (in Roman type) at the conclusion of which the poet reverts to italics for the last line: "*Look he is harmless, have mercy on him.*"

In other translations, the key word in that last line is rendered as "blameless." Either way, Breyten's debatable harmlessness or blamelessness would become the leitmotiv and animating engine of the rest of his life, but at that early stage the Afrikaner reading public was more than merciful; it was ecstatic, and within months the young poet received word that he had been awarded the Afrikaner Press Corporation Prize, the first of five major Afrikaner literary prizes he would receive in the coming decade. With the prize money on its way, he immediately began making arrangements to travel to South Africa with Yolande to receive the award in person, but, to his horror—and, he says, to his complete surprise—he was told that Yolande would not be granted a visa: the apartheid state simply refused to recognize the validity of their manifestly illegal interracial marriage, in effect condemning Breyten to a life of exile. Breyten got truly angry. In an open letter to a Cape Town newspaper he declared, "If I could give up my Afrikanerhood today, I would. I am ashamed of my people. I am shamed by the humiliation of my wife, my family and friends, and her family. . . . I hate and abhor apartheid with all its implications, and if it is representative of Afrikanerdom, if the two cannot be separated, then I see no future for the Afrikaner in our beautiful country."

The breach was complete. With the passing months, Breyten's rage became stronger and stronger, and he poured it into his poetry. The crazy thing was that the more he excoriated his countrymen, the more they—or, at any rate, the reading élite, whose comfortable liberalism he savaged no less thoroughly—adored him for it: never before had the language been made to sing like this. Ever more obviously the greatest poet of his generation, he was taking the Afrikaans language places it had never been, breaking it down, breaking it open, opening it out. Ryk Hattingh, a young writer of the next generation, characterized Breytenbach for me as an Afrikaner Dante: "Dante did exactly the same thing, a political exile undermining the home regime by hijacking its vernacular, its very language." And the younger generation was the most captivated, the most subverted—not only by the power of Breyten's poetry but by the image of the poet himself, this thrilling Beat rebel living free, snarling and singing, in Paris.

There were layers upon layers of oddity here. One after another, his publishers dropped him, furiously protesting that this time he had gone too far, but no sooner was he dropped than he garnered another prize. For vituperation was by no means Breytenbach's only chord. There was also a pervasive homesickness, a deep, deep love of home and homeland coursing right alongside all the bitterness, and a heartrending sense of exile and remove: "ma / I've been thinking / if I ever come home / it will be without warning towards daybreak . . . there's still a blueness on the world / sht—softly I open the backyard gate." And so forth. The Afrikaners

BEWARE
OF
UNEMPLOYED
DOG
Ed Arno

loved this stuff, its uncanny specificity; it was almost worth keeping him in exile just to keep getting more of it. (His descriptions of the physical beauty of the Boland at times verge on the hallucinatory.) And then there was the love poetry: supple, sensuous erotic verse whose like the language had never seen; poetry stripped of any sense of political subtext except for the outrage of its very existence—the never-ending scandal that the finest love poetry in the Afrikaans language was being written in celebration of a "colored" woman, who, furthermore, couldn't even read it. (So who was he writing it *for*?)

On top of everything else, there was the psychodrama of it all, the eerie sense of a writer almost sleepwalking toward his own doom, fully conscious, utterly unaware. In the poem "breyten prays for himself" he pleads, "Keep Pain far from Me o Lord / That others may bear it / Be taken into custody, Shattered / Stoned / Hanged / Lashed / Used / Tortured / Crucified / Interrogated / Placed under house arrest / Made to slave their guts out / Banished to obscure islands till the end of their days / Wasting in damp pits down to slimy green imploring bones / Worms in their stomachs heads full of nails / But not *Me* / Never give us Pain or complain." This in 1964, in his very first book, and already it's as if he can see it coming. Simultaneously, in the book of prose pieces he includes a dreamlike scene of himself on the beach with his parents, only his father has been struck mysteriously dumb and his mother is gravely ill: she tries to tell him something, but he cannot hear, and as he bends closer she dies. He is overwhelmed, because he knows that "my mother has died of heartbreak on account of me." This foreshadows almost exactly what is going to happen some fifteen years down the line. Such moments of dark premonition—visions of hypnotic intensity—occur again and again, and they render the poetry all the more compelling.

BREYTENBACH wrote continuously, and yet he increasingly came to doubt the efficacy of writing—or, at any rate, of writing only. Though he remained in exile, he was still a leading member of the so-called Sestiges, or Sixties, movement in new Afrikaans writing, but he came to feel alienated from what he saw as the merely cultural posturings of its members, their willingness to remain confined within the laager of Afrikanerdom (even if, through their writing, they saw themselves as incrementally expanding its boundaries from within) when he felt that what was needed was a razing of the laager itself. By the mid-sixties, Breyten was anxiously trawling for some as yet undefined but decidedly more engaged alternative.

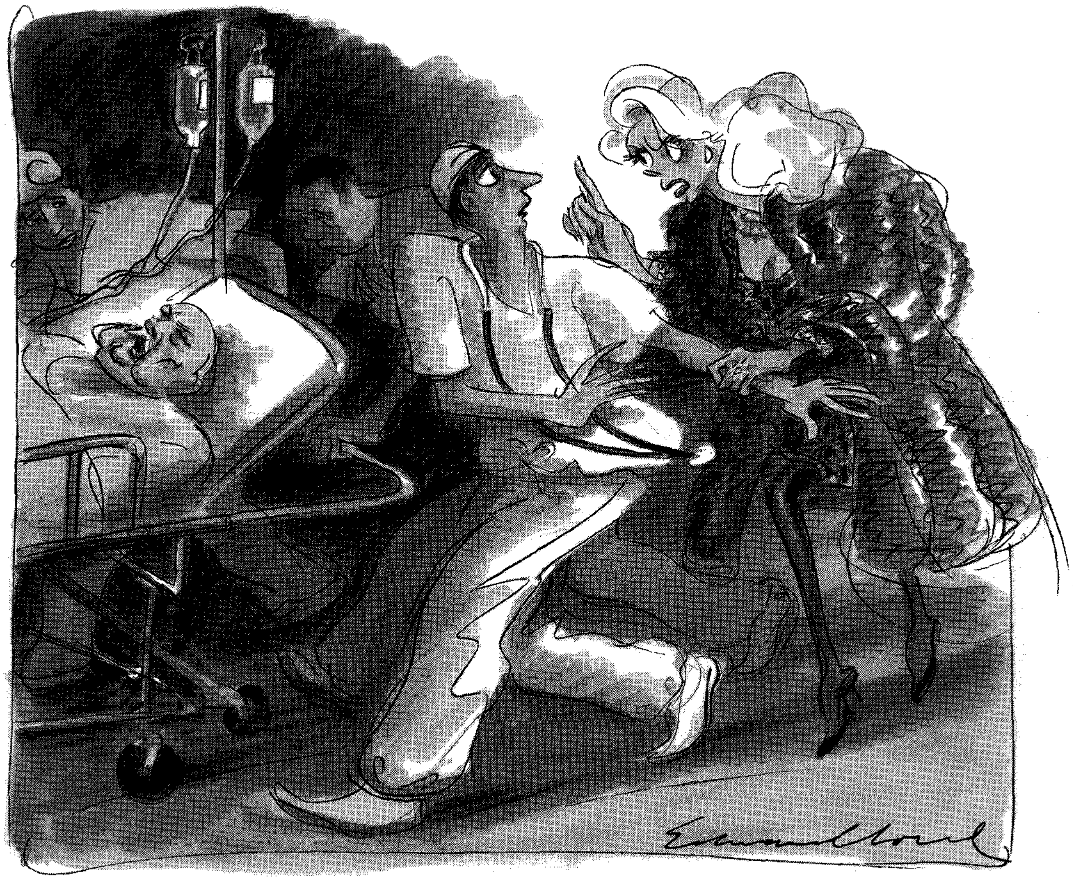
In Paris, he began seeking out the company of more activist-oriented South African exiles. Paris itself, meanwhile, was about to erupt in a political drama of its own—in May of 1968, surging students and workers and artists almost succeeded in toppling the sclerotic administration of Charles de Gaulle. Militance was rampant—some nonviolent and some less so. "Direct action"—which is to say, activism several degrees beyond Gandhi's—was a particularly bracing slogan.

Breytenbach observed and participated and drew his lessons. Like many young radicals of that era, he grew contemptuous of the depleted institutions of the old left—especially the French Communist Party, which played a particularly regressive and disreputable role during May of 1968. A few months later, as Soviet-led tanks crushed the Prague Spring, the French Party was one of the world's first Communist Parties to extend its heartiest congratulations to the Old Guard in the Kremlin. The South African Communist Party, or S.A.C.P., was *the* first—and therein lay a huge dilemma for Breyten and many of the other young, ardent South African exiles and would-be activists. For the S.A.C.P. had a lock on the executive organs of the African National Congress in exile during those years: it controlled the A.N.C.'s finances and security and communications; and even non-S.A.C.P. leaders, such as the A.N.C.'s chairman, Oliver Tambo, were effectively surrounded by S.A.C.P. cadres. Breyten objected to the S.A.C.P.'s style, which he considered Stalinist—that is, both doctrinaire and rigidly hierarchical—and he also objected to its long-term gradualist and racially oblivious strategy.

Breyten was by no means alone in these misgivings. In fact, the A.N.C. in exile was itself rent by internal battles along the same lines. The London A.N.C. was under the domination of the S.A.C.P., and worked closely with the French Communist Party to impose its control over the French anti-apartheid movement; the Algerian outpost of the A.N.C., by contrast, was in the hands of so-called Africanists, members of a movement that (like Breyten) was less in thrall to Moscow and favored a more militant and race-conscious approach. And they, too, were grappling for control in Paris.

Johnny Makathini, a lifelong activist, militant, exile, and insomniac conspirator, was the chief representative of the Algerian A.N.C., and he now began courting Breyten in a serious way. In 1969, he recruited him to work with a clandestine leftist organization called Solidarité, an outgrowth of the wartime French Resistance that had become a sort of servicing agency and clearing house for anti-imperialist liberation movements the Third World over. Its leader, an Egyptian Jew named Henri Curiel, now took a special, almost paternal interest in Breyten, seeing to his training in the techniques of conspiracy, smuggling, and subterfuge. Makathini, meanwhile, helped to put together a small secret organization of non-Communist white South African exiles—called Atlas originally, and later Okhela—with the approval, he assured its members, of top elements in the A.N.C., though the Okhela's people were never to mention the organization's existence to any ordinary activists. (At one point, however, Tambo himself came to address them secretly.)

Curiously, during this same period (which was also a period of considerable painterly and literary productivity for him) Breyten was immersing himself in a discipline of an altogether different sort: he had joined a Zen center. "I know, I know," he once acknowledged



"Now, remember, Doctor, no heroic measures."

• •

to me, smiling. "To be a Zen Communist seems a contradiction. But it's not such a contradiction as all that. The concreteness, shying away from abstractions, not manipulating facts or other people, forswearing personal ambition, attentiveness, *awareness*—all these are functional political precepts as well."

The Zen influence—the evenness, the tolerance for incompatibles, the way of seeing—was making itself increasingly felt in Breyten's painting, but the poetry was becoming more and more overtly political, most notably in a new volume of poems published in Holland in 1972, which soon became the first piece of Afrikaans literature ever to come under South African government proscription. The ban was hardly surprising, since the volume included the instantaneously notorious poem "Letter from Abroad to Butcher," dedicated to "Balthazar," which is to say to Prime Minister Balthazar John Vorster. In one stanza, the poem adopted the agonized viewpoint of a political prisoner, but in the next the poet addressed the Prime Minister directly:

> and you, butcher,
> *you who are entrusted with the security*
>   *of the state*
> *what do you think of when the night*
>   *reveals her*
> *framework*
> *and the first babbling shriek is squeezed*
>   *out*
> *of the prisoner*
> *as in a birth*
> *with the fluids of parturition? . . .*
> *does your heart also stiffen in your throat*
> *when you touch the extinguished limbs*
> *with the same hands that will fondle*
>   *your wife's*
> *mysteries?*

The poem was said to have enraged Vorster—and antipathy for the insolent poet thereafter became a private obsession of the Prime Minister.

LATER that year, bafflingly, Yolande received an approval on her regularly proffered and regularly denied visa application. (Had strings been pulled somewhere? By Cloete? By Jan?) She and Breyten were granted permission for a ninety-day visit, on condition that they agree to keep it strictly private, quiet, and nonpolitical.

A strictly private, quiet, and nonpolitical visit was not in the cards, however. From the moment of their arrival, the last week in December of 1972, their every move was dogged by journalists and played up in the news media. The public attention was by no means all negative. On the contrary, as the novelist André Brink subsequently recalled, the great poet "was swept through the country in a wave of near-hysterical adulation, even in the most conservative circles." If the Afrikaners were momentarily ravished by the human—the positively *charming*—face of their fire-breathing, previously demonized exiled prophet (for no matter how bitter or angry his writings and pronouncements, Breyten has almost always come across in person as gentle, wry, self-mocking, eminently delightful and delightable), he was no less overwhelmed, all over again, by the natural warmth and vitality of many of the Afrikaners he was seeing. By that, and by the sheer physical splendor of the place—its light and its vistas. And by the grace, at long last, of being able to linger for hours and days at a time, in the presence of his parents, in the coziness of their Wellington home, and to show Yolande off and show her around. All the things, in short, that he had been dreaming about longingly for more than a decade in the cold, gray north. Though the title of the memoir he would write about that trip, "A Season in Paradise," was obviously ironical, it wasn't entirely so; South Africa was continuously being experienced by him, with the fiercest intensity, as *both* heaven and hell.

It happened that the University of Cape Town summer school had already scheduled a weeklong conference—a sort of ten-year retrospective—on the Sestigers movement for the last week in January, and now that Breytenbach, one of the movement's preëminent masters, was actually in the country he was, of course, invited to take part. Breyten delivered a scalding address. "Mine will be a funeral oration," he began, and it quickly became clear that he no longer put much stock in literature as a transformative agent. Yes, he acknowledged, "Afrikaans writers occupy a privileged if unenviable position in the tribe, even if only by virtue of the fuss made about them, because so many of that tribe's aspirations pass for cultural aspirations." Still, "I contend that our literature, no matter how clever sometimes, is largely a product of our stagnation and our alienation, and that it cannot be anything else, given the framework within which it originates."

The audience's response to Breyten's talk was rapturous—so rapturous that it was by no means clear whether the majority had grasped the implications of what he was saying. In private, his friends and fellow-writers pressed him for specific alternatives, and, in turn, tried to press their own misgivings upon him, but he seemed eerily immune to and removed from their entreaties.

Breyten saw hardly anything of Jan on that trip, but he saw a good deal of Cloete, and they spent a lot of time arguing. Cloete also accompanied Breyten and Yolande on many of their car excursions. But Breyten managed to ditch Cloete on occasion to undertake a variety of secret missions for his underground cabal, getting in touch with a new Okhela recruit, for example; and scaring her half to death (or so she later testified at his trial) with requests that she obtain information on how airports and harbors operated, so as to facilitate the possible future importation of arms. (He denies the latter charge.)

One day, late in their trip, while Breyten and Yolande were back in his parents' Wellington home, someone—"Let's just say an 'acquaintance' " is how Breyten framed the matter, coyly, in "A Season in Paradise" (in fact, it was Cloete)—called to inform him that two men from Pretoria were insisting on meeting him and taking him out for a private meal in a secluded spot, not even in Johannesburg or Cape Town: they'd come down to see him right there in neighboring Paarl. And he was not to refuse. A few evenings later, without telling either Yolande or his parents, so as not to alarm them, he drove over for the rendezvous. The two Pretorians proved to be top officials from the Bureau of State Security, or BOSS, the apartheid regime's Central Intelligence Agency. (The senior of the two, Jan Vermaak, was one of the bureau's very top people.) The dinner, in the private back room of a hotel restaurant, went on in a spirit of positively creepy politesse, but in the end the gist of his companions' discourse boiled down to this: they knew everything about him, he was on the wrong track, they were all-powerful and could hurt him terribly, but they were still willing to extend their largesse, so how about it—why not coöperate? For the time being, matters were left at that. They had a few drinks at the bar downstairs. ("We are all friends. The cats and the mouse are the best pals on earth," Breyten wrote in "A Season in Paradise.") He was not to mention this little conversation to anyone, and they would be expecting to hear from him before his departure. After which, he was "allowed to drive home, through the fields of my youth."

Breyten and Yolande wanted to stay on—especially after his father suffered a minor heart attack, for which Breyten blamed himself—but they couldn't: their ninety days were up, and, notwithstanding his father's illness, there would be no extension. On March 30, 1973, they rushed through Jan Smuts Airport, past the ticket counters and customs and passport control. Suddenly, a heavy hand seized Breyten's elbow and an icy voice demanded to know what, exactly, he thought he was doing. Of course, it was Vermaak, with his pal beside him, and this time they were accompanied by another man, identified solely as "Colleague" in Breyten's account of the incident in "Season," though in fact this was his oldest brother, Jan. Why, they wanted to know, hadn't he got back in touch? Luckily, Yolande, oblivious of what was happening behind her, was already boarding the plane up ahead. What were they going to do—create a scene right then and there? The grip loosened. Vermaak, smiling, extended his hand for a shake, and, like an idiot, Breyten took it. A blond photographer stepped out from behind a pillar and captured the moment. One can easily imagine the purposes to which such a photo could be put, but Breyten didn't stop to think about them: he was already on his way down the ramp, into the plane, and out of the country.

BREYTEN and Yolande returned to Paris. The contradictions of his various involvements were becoming increasingly untenable. He was spending more and more time in Amsterdam, where other Okhela members—notably including Barend Schuitema, then the secretary of the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement—were drafting an Okhela manifesto. His marriage was suffering: Yolande, who had always been an advocate of Breyten's painting, had never warmed to his political adventurism, and he was having to keep most of it secret from her. Besides, he was having affairs—this was partly a matter of the times, partly a matter of his bohemian self-image, partly a matter of the clandestine life itself—including a fling with Schuitema's girlfriend, another prominent Dutch anti-apartheid campaigner.

Soon after Breyten finished the manuscript of "A Season in Paradise" (though he had not yet seen it through to publication), his Okhela colleagues cornered him into making an insane commitment. This was at the beginning of 1975. They needed to send someone to South Africa to recruit two activists, one white and one black, who would agree to come north to Brussels and man a coördinating office—and then to help spirit them out of the country. (The recruiter would take two blank forged passports down with him.) In addition, he would take along a draft of the Okhela manifesto (complete with its call for developing "all possibilities for defensive and offensive direct action") for comment by potential recruits inside the country. It was going to be an extremely delicate assignment, and, for some reason, the collective chose Breyten.

He was racked by misgivings. (Those last few weeks, he was working on a painting of himself being crucified.) He wrote Yolande a letter in which he acknowledged that things had been going badly but promised that soon he would shed his other commitments and return to her and to his work. He continued to hesitate, but in the end, perhaps out of loyalty to Makathini and Curiel, perhaps out of an exhausted surrender to the fate he had already so clearly envisioned, he agreed to go. ("You have to be careful what you create," he told me years later. "You run the risk of prefiguring your own future—you can confess things into happening. In the future, I'm going to try to write exclusively about taking walks on the beach.") He shaved his beard and adopted a new identity and a new passport (under the name Christian Galaska, an Italian academic on holiday) and headed for Rome. There he applied for a visa and boarded a plane for the flight down.

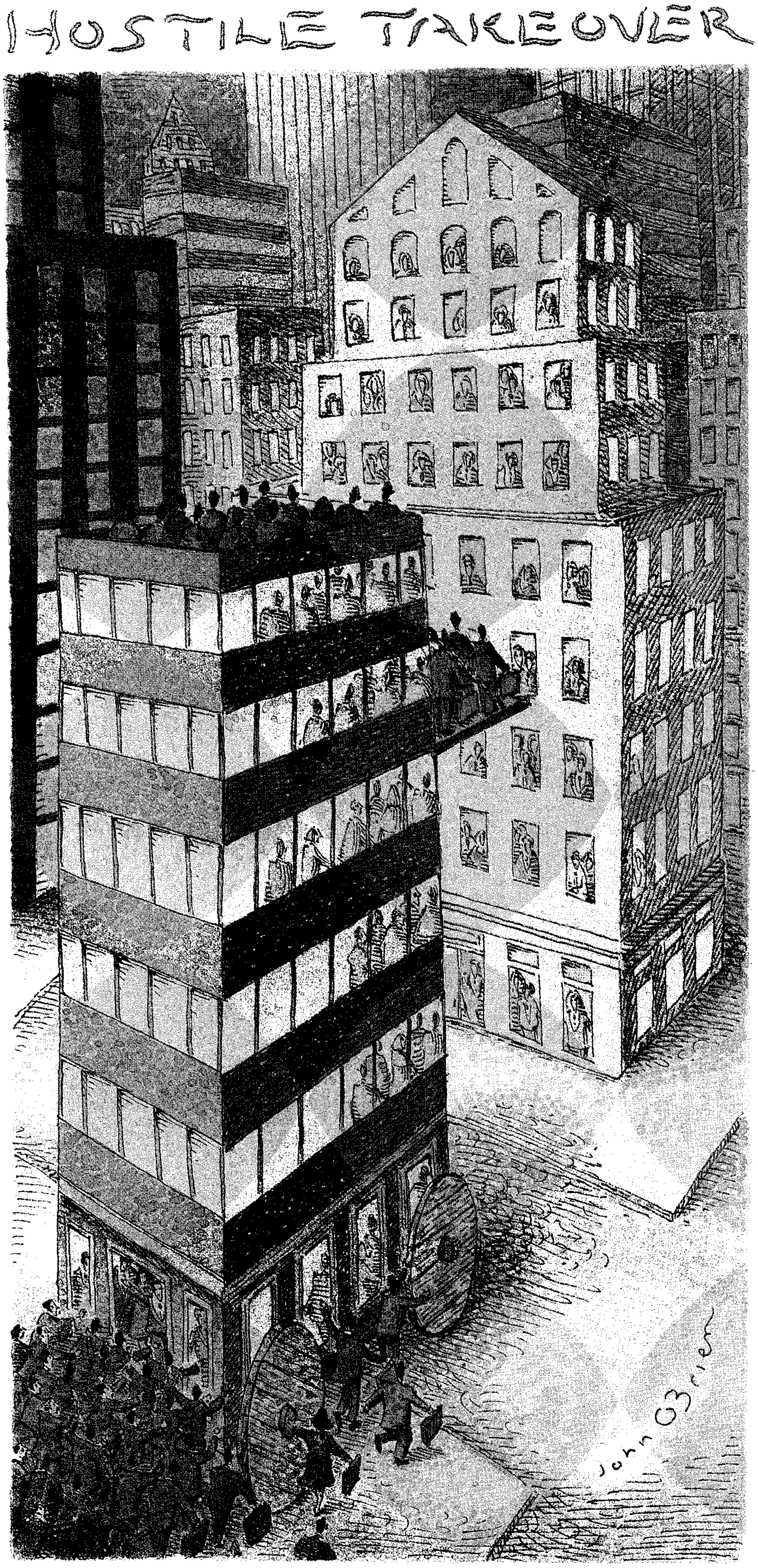
THE mission was botched before it even began. Breytenbach subsequently inferred that South African consulates throughout the world, and particularly the one in Rome, had been placed under special instructions to facilitate the visa application of any Christian Galaska who might happen to present himself.

So what had happened? Who had betrayed him? I recently accompanied Breyten on a trip to South Africa, and one evening, over dinner at a restaurant in the Cape Town harbor district, I asked him about his own suspicions.

"I never really found out," he replied, sighing. He went on to list people who would have known of his coming movements—Makathini, Curiel, Schuitema, Schuitema's girlfriend—any of whom might conceivably have been working for BOSS, or, more likely, for the London A.N.C., which would have had a motive itself to betray this upstart organization of independent anti-apartheid activists to BOSS. In the meantime, Makathini, Curiel, and Schuitema had all ended up either dead or unhinged. "I was out of my depth, of course," Breyten said. "But so were we all. And, at least, in the end, I survived." He paused, gazing out over the harbor. "As for the rest, I don't know—and, what's more, I don't want to know. People come up to me every few months with some new piece of information, and I tell them I don't want it. To become wound up in that labyrinth would simply be to let myself be manipulated by it all over again, forever. It's just as well that all those bottomless transferences and fantasies got burned out of me once and for all."

He took a sip of Boland wine. "And who knows? Maybe there weren't *any* finks as such—maybe nobody intentionally betrayed anyone. Maybe they—BOSS and the others—were just damn good at what they do, and had us under good, solid surveillance the entire time. Or maybe we just got sloppy and inadvertently screwed things up. Makathini was screwing up all the time."

But then so was Breyten himself. Ampie Coetzee, who was his publisher



for a long time and is still one of his closest friends, throws up his hands in exasperation whenever he approaches the subject. "He was such a bloody fool, such an inept conspirator," Coetzee told me in Cape Town. "He may well have simply tripped himself up—for instance, by being too careless over the phone—or even actively betrayed himself. His whole life, he has practiced a kind of body art—'*allow me to introduce you to the lean man in the green sweater*.' He could easily have written the authorities himself to tell them he was coming. I'm only being half facetious." In "The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist," his 1983 memoir of those years and the middle volume of the now concluding trilogy, Breytenbach himself candidly acknowledges, "My going there, my being there, was contrary to all principles of underground organization." This was true in at least two senses. First, by sending in Breytenbach his handlers were sending in a man who was seemingly on the verge of a nervous breakdown even before he entered the country. Second, he was an incredibly famous man on the verge of a nervous breakdown. And, on top of that, he was a poet and a painter, an artist; he had no business trying to be a spy and, as Coetzee says, very little aptitude for it. As Christopher Hope subsequently wrote, in a piece in *The London Magazine*, "He crept about the country in a manner most likely to attract attention. . . . To say he left a trail does not do him justice: he positively blazed one."

As soon as Breyten arrived in the country, for example, he began an affair with one of the stewardesses on the flight down, even though it was known that stewardesses on South African Airways were often BOSS informants; indeed, Breyten believes this stewardess did end up informing on him. A few months later, in any case, she married his newly divorced brother Cloete.

Breyten made contact with more than forty people during his first two weeks in South Africa—while apparently being tracked the entire time. Driving around one day, a week or so after he arrived in Cape Town, he finally noticed that his car was being tailed by a white Ford. The next few days were "like something out of a very corny third rate movie," as he writes in "The True Confessions." He would lose his tails, they would track him down, he would lose them again. But in any case he had nowhere to go, and he was now terribly exposed—"a bat outside in daylight," he says. Police roadblocks and checkpoints sprang up all around the city, and the airport and the train and bus terminals were swarming with reinforcements. He eventually contrived to catch the night express train to Johannesburg—boarding not at Cape Town Central Station but at its next stop, which happened to be Wellington. He got a friend to drive him there on back roads, passing through Paarl, in the hills above which, just a few weeks earlier, the regime had dedicated a hideous phallic Monument to the Taal, and then past Grevilleas, his parents' old boarding house (though, by then, they had retired to Onrus, on the coast), and past many of the other staging areas of his youth, the wellsprings of his vocation. When the night train finally arrived, he boarded it, and made it to Johannesburg without further incident.

But Breyten had nowhere to go there, either. He couldn't very well look up his previous contacts: he had to assume that they had been compromised, and if they hadn't he certainly didn't want to get them into any trouble. (At one point, he hid out in a movie theatre, only to be confronted by a patriotic documentary short about the S.A.D.F.'s reconnaissance units, with his brother Jan blazoned, big as John Wayne, across the screen.) His visa was running out. In "The True Confessions" he writes, "Everything was coming to a close, the various pieces of the jigsaw puzzle were being fitted together and, perhaps fatalistically, I felt that it was no longer possible to fit the odd-shaped blank piece that I am into any other hole than the one that seemed preordained for it." He booked a seat for a flight to Paris, on August 19th, and went ("maybe with death already in my soul") to Jan Smuts Airport at the appointed hour. The terminal was like a military camp, bristling with security forces. Something Breyten didn't know at the time (it had been in all the papers, but he hadn't dared to look at a paper in days, for fear of being confronted by the image of his own face) was that later that evening Prime Minister Balthazar John Vorster, the Butcher himself, would be returning from state visits to Uruguay and Paraguay.

Though Breyten assumed

"Charles is a journalist, but, of course, not one of those bottom feeders."

that the military saturation was all for his benefit, he checked in and presented his passport. A few moments later, Galaska was being paged, and before he could even approach the information counter a gentleman came up beside him and asked, "Are you Mr. Galaska? Would you mind following me, please?" As he was being led into a small side office, he caught a brief glimpse of his own reflection in a windowpane as he passed.

"Looking into South Africa," he had written, years earlier, "is like looking into the mirror at midnight when one has pulled a face and a train blew its whistle and one's image stayed there, fixed for all eternity. A horrible face, but one's own."

It was just his luck that the case officer on duty that night was the senior BOSS operative, Jan Vermaak. At first, although Vermaak appeared delighted to have nabbed the dreaded Galaska, he didn't seem to recognize him as Breytenbach. Or perhaps he was just playing games. Breyten kept up the charade, protesting his bewildered innocence in Italian, but the questioning grew increasingly tense. Finally, Vermaak peered at Breyten intently, then rose and, pointing squarely between his eyes, growled, in Afrikaans, "Come on, Breyten, the game's up. We know who you are. Do we have to fetch your brother so as to confront you with him? You know he's here at the airport right now."

And indeed he was, for the Prime Minister's plane had in the meantime landed, and travelling right alongside Vorster throughout the entire trip had been Cloete (ostensibly in his role as a photographer for the newspaper *Beeld*).

"No," Breyten replied, in Afrikaans. "That won't be necessary."

Donald Woods, the South African journalist, was subsequently told by Vorster's Justice Minister Jimmy Kruger that later that same evening, when Kruger personally informed the Prime Minister of the capture of his poetic nemesis Breytenbach, Vorster smiled and then instructed him, "Don't tell anyone else, and definitely not the press, not for a while anyway. I want some time to savor this one all to myself."

OLE!
VIVA
EL MICKEY!
WANTED

"Are you the one they call El Cóndor?"

• •

IT would be eight days—during which the police arrested dozens of Breyten's contacts—before Breyten's parents, in Onrus, finally heard the news of his arrest over the radio. His father let out a wail and crumpled onto the bed, moaning repeatedly, "I will not survive this—this I will not survive." That evening, his mother busied herself in the kitchen, resolutely cooking a batch of sausages and eggs and keening, "We must go on, we simply have to go on."

Breyten, meanwhile, was in solitary confinement in the maximum-security section of Pretoria Central; in fact, he was on its death row, in a small cell, to which he had been taken soon after his arrest. Nothing in his training—the clandestine political work or the Zen studies—seems to have prepared him for what he was now facing. He was completely out of his element, and he was reeling.

"The actual moment of arrest and the terrifying hours immediately thereafter stripped away any intellectual sense, for example, of Zen-centeredness," he recalled for me in a conversation a few years ago in a Paris café. "All there was was this brutal changeover from having some control over your life, no matter how minimal, to having none whatsoever—to complete impotence—and then the shock at the ferocity of your own urge to survive: the rat scrambling around inside your skull, snarling."

The first phase of Breyten's interrogation lasted forty-eight hours straight, during which he was denied any sleep. He was ordered to write out a statement, the statement was taken away, and he was ordered to write it out again. He was questioned at length, and in relays. In the Paris café, Breyten said, "Nowadays, sure, looking back on my situation then, I'd say, 'Don't talk, just don't talk to them.' At first, I just kept protesting my innocence. 'But if you're innocent,' they'd say, 'write us about your innocence.' And the minute you begin writing—well, then you're fucked. My big mistake, of course, was imagining that since I was so obviously smarter than these lunkheaded interrogators I ought to be able to outsmart them. Which, of course, now I realize is crazy, but I didn't realize it at the time—and I desperately *needed* to outsmart them. There were people I was trying to protect—I needed to get a sense of what they knew. So I would say or write something in an at-

"Do forgive me, sir. I've been seeing too much gratuitous violence on TV."

• •

tempt to draw them out. I never gave real names, always used made-up code names. There were certain things one didn't do."

Breyten was silent for a time. "And then," he said, exhaling deeply, "I mean, I *am* a writer. In a strange, macabre way, it's a fascinating experience to be writing one's confessions to the police. For me, writing has always been a way of better understanding the connections of the world. But, in that situation, to really probe and manipulate those linkages immediately posed, in a very literal way, the life-and-death sorts of issues we writers ordinarily just like to make believe we're confronting. And then, as well, I did feel a need to explain myself, to justify and account for the decisions of my life—to myself as well as to them. And, too, the way in which the whole interrogation was taking place in Afrikaans—the language itself, after all, being at the core of my problem, my sense of complicity, but, also, the hope that it could arouse a feeling of sympathy in them—that, too, was key."

Although Breyten was not physically tortured—and, of course, during this time there were many who were being tortured, especially among the black prisoners—the pressures brought to bear on him were uniquely intense. He was not just a white Afrikaner political prisoner—a rare enough bird—and hence a traitor over and above any mere subversiveness but also an Afrikaner *writer*, with all that that implied.

During the months that followed, Breyten was passed among a battery of interrogators, but with one such agent—the lead investigator for the domestic-security police, a man named Kalfie (Little Calf) Broodryk—he developed a peculiarly perverse relationship. At a moment when Breyten was exceptionally racked and vulnerable, Broodryk made a personal project of this new prisoner—and Broodryk himself was, as Breyten now says, "really twisted, that guy . . . really twisted." Perhaps Broodryk's most cynical display of power occurred one Saturday morning, when, accompanied only by his son, he came to take Breyten out of solitary and to drive him to his own home, for a walk through his garden, a meal with his family, a bit of badinage with his two young daughters—this was, after all, the foremost poet in the language. He then invited Breyten to make use of his bathroom to wash up, even offered him the use of his own toothbrush, before hurrying him back to prison. But, once there, instead of escorting him immediately to his cell, he led him into a small side office, in the middle of which stood Yolande—the first time they had seen one another since his arrest. And then Broodryk didn't leave the room: he just stood around, savoring a reunion made all the more agonizing by the previous few hours' cleverly choreographed hijinks.

And yet a few months later Breyten dedicated a new book, consisting entirely of poems composed during his imprisonment, to this very Broodryk. Broodryk's interest in allowing Breyten to continue writing such poetry and then in seeing to its publication seemed twofold—in part to further toy with Breyten's mind, and in part to win points with the Afrikaner professoriat, whose cultural validation he appeared to crave. The regime's interest in allowing publication of the book was more convoluted. Many of Breyten's poems included gut-wrenchingly vivid evocations of his actual situation. The decision to allow them to be published seemed to be another swirl in the Afrikaner pattern of simultaneous revulsion from and idealization of Breyten's poetry—the notion that they could separate the language master from the terrorist. (Even with Breyten in prison, his poems continued to appear in school anthologies, though the box reserved for his photograph was regularly blanked out.)

Why Breyten was allowing the book's publication at all under those conditions—by Perskor-Utigewers, an establishment printing house closely allied to the regime's élite Broederbond—and, more gallingly, with *that* dedication, is another matter. Breyten claims that he was desperate to get out to the wider world a signal, any signal, that he was still alive, and, furthermore, that he hoped that whatever royalties might accrue could be of some help to Yolande. As for the dedication, he says that it was a simple matter of horse-trading, that Broodryk insisted on the dedication in exchange for allowing the book's publication. All of which may be true. But it is also true that by this point a frightening symbiosis between the two had developed, a relationship uncannily captured in one of the collection's poems:

> I had dealings with the enemy
> my eyes became entangled in the eyes of the enemy
> with his eyes he held mine
> the better for to stab me in the back

The role of literary agent in this affair was played by Breyten's brother Cloete. He collaborated closely with the authorities from the earliest days of Breyten's incarceration—even before the arrest was made public. In "The True Confessions" Breyten relates that on the fourth day "my one brother is allowed in to come and see me briefly and in so doing there's this terrible destruction of the love that I had for him as a brother, him, on such close terms with them, him taking exactly the same line they did, doing their talking for them." Cloete would later claim that he was just pulling whatever strings he had at his disposal to rescue Breyten from the mess he had managed to get himself into.

At any rate, it was now Cloete, acting on behalf of the family, who secured Breyten's defense team—two nervous lawyers who apparently had never tried a political case in their lives. And that was the whole idea: the regime was tremendously eager for this case *not* to become a political one, at least from Breyten's side. The regime may have been particularly anxious lest a combative Breytenbach publicly reveal whatever he might happen to know about an S.A.D.F. incursion into an Angola on the eve of colonial liberation, which, though top secret and emphatically denied, was at that very moment being led by, among others, Breyten's brother Jan.

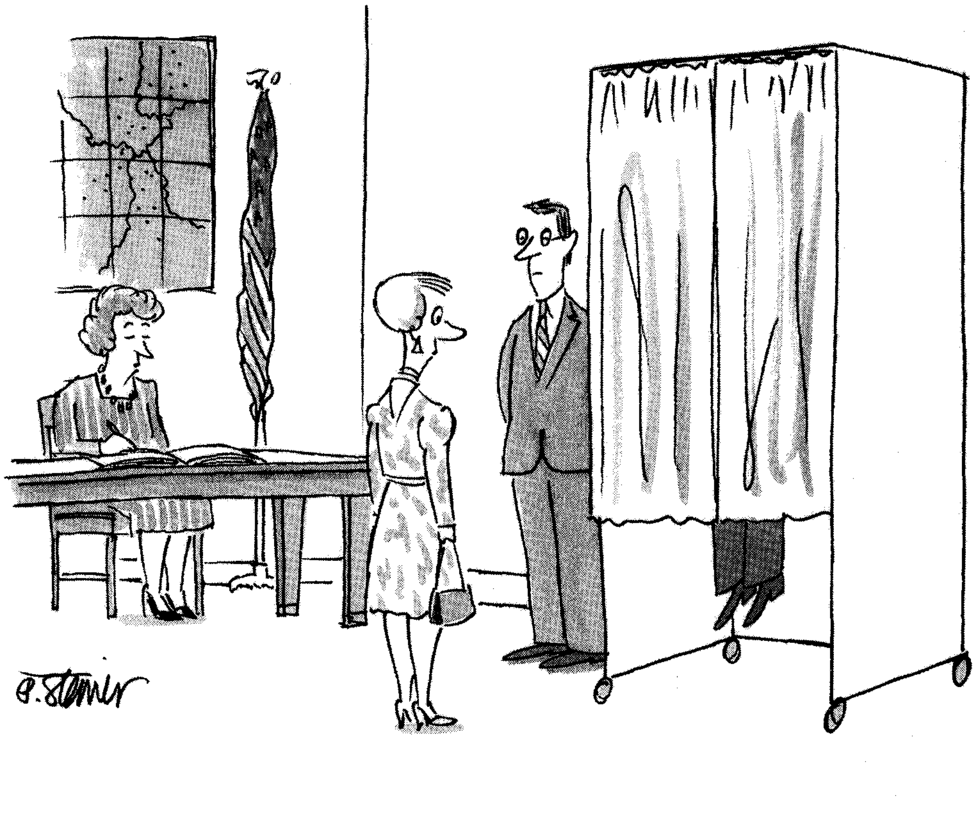
The original indictment against Breyten was terrifyingly broad. Framed under provisions of the Terrorism Act, it alleged large-scale weapons smuggling, plotting of violent acts of sabotage, and conspiracy to commit still wider crimes—charges that carried the distinct possibility of a capital conviction. It's worth remembering that throughout this period Breyten was being housed on a death row that in those days was witnessing the execution of more than two hundred inmates a year. And, although Breyten didn't participate directly in any negotiations, the general outlines of a deal were made clear to him: in exchange for a compliant guilty plea and appropriate expressions of contrition, those still in prison on his account would be released, his own indictment would be whittled back, and he could expect leniency, and even magnanimity—a light sentence, and even then the possibility of an early parole. Meanwhile, he was continuing to meet daily with Broodryk, who had taken to insinuating, "Why bother to have legal representation at all; why don't you leave it in my hands? *I shall defend you.*"

On November 10, 1975, accompanied by counsel, Breyten appeared in the Pretoria Supreme Court, Judge Piet Cillié, a leading member of the Broederbond, presiding. The prosecutor read out the bill of indictment, after which Judge Cillié remanded the case over for trial eleven days thence. During this period, the regime-controlled media worked themselves into a frenzy of vituperation. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, the crunch negotiations were taking place. A few days before the start of the actual trial, the remainder of those who had been arrested with Breyten (some had been facing sentences of up to twenty years) were released—an early indication, seemingly, that the fix was in.

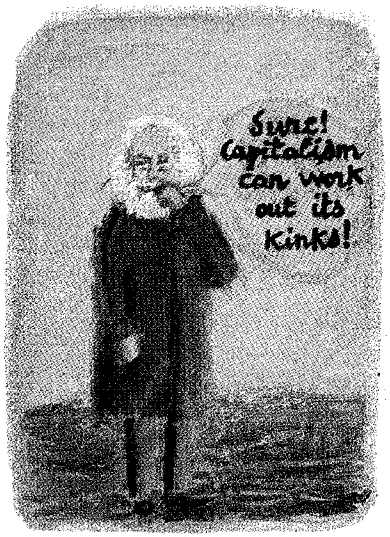
On the morning of November 21st, when the trial began, family members gathered. Yolande had been advised by Breyten's lawyers to go back to Paris, so she was not there, and Breyten's mother felt incapable, both physically and psychologically, of making the trip up from Cape Province. But his father was there, pale and shrunken (he was still recovering from the cardiac episode), clutching his daughter, Rachel, for support. Cloete was there; Jan, of course, was not.

The trial itself was surprisingly brief—a matter of a few days. The prosecutor began by reducing the indictment substantially. He then worked his way through a parade of coöperative witnesses who laid bare the full folly of Breyten's delusional politics and exploits. His own lawyers barely bothered to cross-examine: they simply pleaded him guilty as charged.

As the hearing moved toward its sentencing phase, on November 25th, the defense team finally seemed to rouse itself, calling a young Afrikaner graduate student in literature to the stand and asking her to expound on the significance of Breyten's poetry. She did so, but mainly she *read* some of the poetry: a love song to Yolande, though achingly to South Africa as well ("kissing you leads me to think / of vineyards gaunt in the sodden winters"); a poem dedicated to his father; and then a third poem ("ma / I've been thinking / if I ever come home / it will be without warning to-

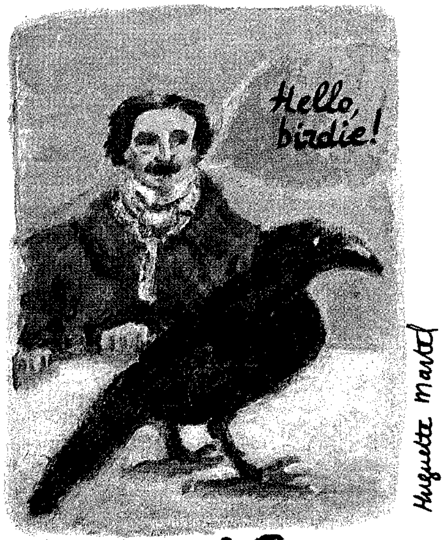


If they had had Prozac in the nineteenth century


Sure! Capitalism can work out its kinks!

Karl Marx

Friedrich Nietzsche


Hello, birdie!

Edgar A. Poe

wards daybreak . . ."). By the time she'd finished, there was hardly a dry eye in the house, with the exception of the judge's.

After this, Breyten rose to address the court. Beginning with a summary of his life, he emphasized the theme of love (love of parents, of country, of Yolande), almost suggesting that if only he had been allowed to love Yolande in peace, many years ago, none of this might have happened. He detailed the stages of his political evolution, and then seemed to forswear it all:

> I accept the responsibility for what I have done. I know now that the manner and the methods by which I tried to work for the growth of our civilization and our future were wrong, that my behavior was foolish and that things I got mixed up in with good intentions could lead to harm to other people. . . . I am sorry for all the stupid, thoughtless things I did which brought me here and I ask to be forgiven for them.

Breyten went on to express contrition to those whom he might have hurt or insulted "unintentionally or out of thoughtlessness," and, specifically, to Prime Minister Vorster, "for a crass and insulting poem which I addressed to him." He added, "There was and is no justification for it. I am sorry." But he wasn't finished. He proceeded to extend his heartfelt thanks to "Colonel Broodryk [and] the officers who worked under him, for the correct and humane way in which they treated me from the beginning of my detention," adding, for good measure, that "Their courteous conduct made these traumatic three months bearable for me." He then concluded, hauntingly, almost creepily, by quoting St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

The spectators watched, drop-jawed, as Colonel Broodryk and the prosecutor both attested to Breyten's perfect contrition, characterizing him as an unfortunate pawn in the hands of sinister forces abroad, and then endorsed the minimum possible sentence.

Judge Cillié retired to his chambers to consider the sentence, and within just a few hours he returned to the courtroom and announced his decision: nine years' imprisonment, without possibility of parole.

DUMBFOUNDED and shattered, Breyten was led out of the courtroom and taken initially to Broodryk's office. "I was sitting in the corner, facing Broodryk, when two of his colleagues came bursting in, boisterously enthusiastic—they didn't see me—to congratulate him on the completeness of his triumph," he recalls. "So who knows? On the other hand—and this was a truly horrifying moment—later that same day, he was escorting me back to my cell, he was wearing dark glasses, when suddenly he started crying."

There was a good deal of speculation that Vorster himself had personally dictated the sentence—and, indeed, some indication that between Breyten's final statement and the actual sentencing Cillié had received a phone call from the Prime Minister in his chambers.

Peter Dreyer, whose account of the trial forms a centerpiece of his masterly South African study "Martyrs and Fanatics," has an interesting theory. Pointing to a phrase in Cillié's sentencing speech—"In the circumstances now existing, the climate now prevailing"—he notes that during that very week events in the outside world had taken a decidedly dismaying turn, from the regime's point of view. Up till then, the S.A.D.F.'s (and Jan's) Angolan expeditionary forces had been plowing forward, scoring one victory after another. But now they'd bogged down. On November 21st, the day Breyten's trial started, the Cubans had completed an emergency airlift of a reinforced special-forces battalion into Luanda, the seat of the newly installed M.P.L.A. (Communist-aligned) government, and already those reinforcements were spreading out into the field. The next day, the Washington *Post* published an authoritative, eyewitness account detailing South Africa's intervention on the side of the M.P.L.A.'s rivals, UNITA and the F.N.L.A. Soon thereafter, Zaire had to suspend its backing of the F.N.L.A. (it couldn't be seen to be on the same side as the South Africans). In the United States, Congress was preventing Secretary of State Henry Kissinger from extending American support to the South African effort. The S.A.D.F., including what was soon to be Jan's 32 Battalion, was in retreat on all fronts. Never before had the apartheid regime seemed so isolated. According to Dreyer, Breyten may have merely provided a convenient scapegoat—a readily available, highly visible object lesson through which the regime could intimidate any other potential internal opposition.

Whatever the reason, the outcome of the trial was a disaster for Breyten. Not only had he received a ferociously stiff sentence but also, through his grovelling behavior, he had confounded, if not completely alienated, his few remaining allies. Support committees abroad, at the very moment when they should have been jacking up their efforts, were left bewildered by his behavior. (In Holland, his translator now disavowed him, echoing the tone of an A.N.C. campaign of repudiation that was being led by Schuitema's former girlfriend.) Less sophisticated observers—and, in particular, the fans of his poetic persona—experienced a sort of triple whiplash: the initial shock of his arrest, with all its implications; horror at the spectacle of his abject recantation ("No poet of Breyten's calibre would ever dream of apologizing for his work" was a typical comment); and then the jolt of the ensuing sentence, in all its mercilessness.

Breyten spent most of the next couple of years alone in a narrow, high-ceilinged cell, still, even though he was no longer facing the death penalty, right alongside death row (the better, his warders may have felt, to drive him crazy). One evening in Paris, he described that wing of the Pretoria Central prison to me. "The hanging room—the actual chamber where they executed the prisoners—was, of course, the central characteristic of the place. Even though you never saw the room, you could hear it—you could hear the trapdoor opening. It would send a sort of shuddering through the entire building the mornings people were being hanged. And before that you'd hear the singing with all its different qualities. You could definitely hear when somebody sang—and there'd be singing every evening—that that person was going to die in a few days, as opposed to somebody who still had a few weeks or months. And the interesting thing, or the touching thing, when one person sang alone like that in the middle of the night and you knew he was due to be hanged in two days' time, was how you could actually hear the quality of the listening of the other people, because you knew that everybody else in that prison was awake, lying there with their ears cocked close to the bars or the walls, listening. *You could hear the listening.*"

Worst of all, perhaps, was the isolation: having to be alone, in solitary, after everything he had done and been through, with nothing to do but think and rethink the humiliation and the shamefulness of it all. "Isolation has made me sick of myself, and sick of others," he later wrote. His contacts with the outside world were limited to one letter in each direction per month, not to exceed five hundred words and subject to censorship, and one half-hour noncontact visit. This meant that he often had to choose between writing to his parents and writing to Yolande, for example, or hearing from them and hearing from her. His guards used to tease him regarding any new letter's contents, having read it before giving it to him. "On days when I received a letter from Yolande," Breyten recalls, "I would carry it around for hours, *not opening it*, waiting for the warder's touch to dissipate."

Yolande would come to South Africa as often as she could, but her funds were sorely limited. (She was getting no help, for instance, from the A.N.C.) The authorities had a way of rendering even these visits a torment, though, and between visits Breyten returned to his solitude and to the expanse of solitude yawning before him, the truly horrifying dimensions of which only gradually dawned on him. He fell into a deepening depression, succumbing now to a kind of full-fledged slow-motion nervous breakdown.

MEANWHILE, Broodryk was still coming around, serpentine, plying him with fresh possibilities. His situation, after all, wasn't entirely hopeless, Broodryk assured him. It was such a waste, his rotting away like this. Come, friend, come, why not try . . . And so it was that on June 16, 1976—Day One, as it happened, though Breyten would have had no way of knowing about it, of the great Soweto uprising, which was launched by black students in rebellion against the requirement that they matriculate in Afrikaans, the hated language of their oppression—Breyten sat down, at Broodryk's insistence, and wrote a letter to General Mike Geldenhuys, the head of the security police, offering him a deal. "In short, I believe that you can make much better use of me than is at present the case," he wrote. Why not release him, he proposed, after which he would "try—in collaboration with your service—to become a member of the S.A.C.P." and inform the police about the Party's machinations. He also offered to inform on Schuitema and Makathini and others: just let him go. "I hope that you will accept my proposal," he concluded, "with the sincerity in which I mean it."

That final sentence is crucial in any attempt to evaluate the significance of the letter. How sincerely *did* he mean it? General Geldenhuys, at any rate, never took him up on the offer, and for good reason. Not even a week later, as Dreyer has pointed out, a young warder named Pieter Groenewald, suddenly racked with misgivings, was spilling his guts to the prison commander—or, anyway, so the prosecution would contend at Breyten's second trial. Breyten, it seemed, had managed to develop a relationship besides the one with Broodryk during those first months of his sentence, and this one made the one with Broodryk seem positively transparent.

Beginning in April of 1976, Groenewald, a twenty-year-old rookie guard, took to whiling away his night shifts by regaling Breyten with unlikely tales of his own prowess and machismo. Breyten, avid for any contact, played along, spinning fantasies of his own. Groenewald said he had followed Breyten's trial and admired his stand, his writings, his courage. Breyten requested paper and pencils, so that he could write and draw. (As bad as the sheer isolation had been this strangulation of his creative impulse. It wasn't just that Breyten was being kept from communicating with the outside world; he was now being kept from creating at all, from expressing himself in ways that had become as necessary to him as breathing.) Groenewald provided him with pencils and blank paper, and smuggled out completed poems and drawings, dutifully sending them on to Paris. (Among these were the pencil drawings of blankets and shoes, of copulations and decapitations, and of "The Orange, Four Times," which Breyten later showed me.) Groenewald agreed to smuggle letters out as well, to friends and old allies, both outside and inside the country, many of the latter being the same people Breyten had got into such trouble the first time around.

As the nights passed, the two men began to weave ever more convoluted fantasies of—or plans for (it was hard to tell which)—heroic escapes and subsequent acts of derring-do. (These included, it was alleged, the blowing up of the Monument to the Taal, above Paarl.) But Groenewald presently cracked under the pressure and informed his superiors of their shenanigans—or maybe he had been a plant all along. "Who knows what the hell was going on," Ampie Coetzee subsequently commented. "On the one hand, you have the police's version, and one can never believe a word they say, by definition. And, on the other, you have Breyten's, and he's a poet and, as such, congenitally incapable of merely literal truth." ("The whole thing was obviously a setup," Cloete figures, "and being hopelessly gullible, Breyten fell for it, as usual.") At any rate, from that point forward Groenewald was wired for his nightly conversations with Breyten, and every piece of paper leaving the cell through their supposedly secret channel—including letters, as Dreyer has characterized them, "of stunning indiscretion"—was being routed through the photocopier at secret-police headquarters. The police allowed this charade to continue for several more months, but they were monitoring every letter going in as well, and when those letters grew more and more anxious, urging Breyten to take care—surely something was wrong—the police decided that the game was up. Toward the end of October, they entered his cell to inform him that he was being charged with seventeen counts of violating the Terrorism Act, and that once again he could well be facing the gallows.

This time, however, Yolande took charge of appointing the lawyers, and the new ones proved to be notably competent. More to the point, upon first meeting with Breyten they could immediately infer the extent of his psychological deterioration; the police took eight months to conclude their preparations for the case, during which time Breyten could do nothing but fret, but at least these lawyers now took to visiting him regularly, and slowly they reeled him back in.

The case finally came to trial in June of 1977, amid a new spasm of publicity. This time, however, the case was heard before a far more dispassionate arbiter. (Judge Cillié had a prior commitment; improbably, he was heading a state commission on the causes and lessons of the Soweto uprising.) Breyten's lawyers not only made mincemeat of the prosecution's case (the tapes, recorded in the reverberating well of Breyten's cell, were useless, and Groenewald proved to be a disaster on the stand) but also managed to present evidence concerning the appalling conditions of Breyten's incarceration. The prosecution, seeing its case unravelling, cynically introduced Breyten's letter to General Geldenhuys with its offer to collaborate. Breyten's lawyer calmly rose and asked Breyten about the letter, and Breyten replied that it had just been another admittedly clumsy attempt to maneuver the *boere*. But outside the courtroom damage *had* been done: his activist credentials had been even further tarnished.

The judge ended up dismissing all charges except one, relating to illegal smuggling of correspondence, for which he fined Breyten fifty rand, payable on completion of his sentence. More important, he ordered an immediate rectification of the conditions of his imprisonment for the remainder of that sentence: for starters, he was to be taken away from death row. A few weeks later Breyten was transferred out of Pretoria altogether and taken to Pollsmoor prison, on the outskirts of his beloved Cape Town.

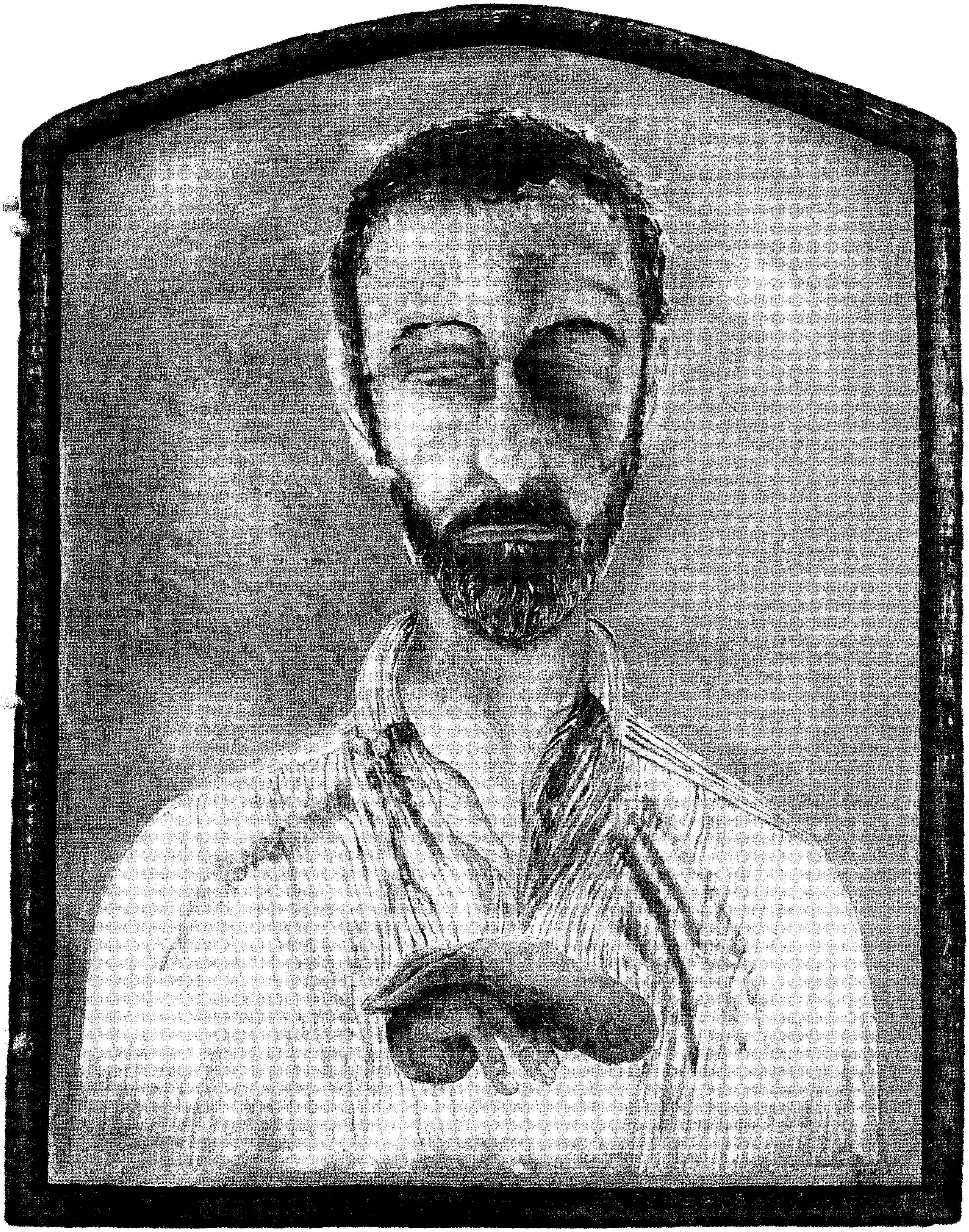
At Pollsmoor, the conditions of Breyten's incarceration improved considerably: he was allowed outside on a regular basis, was no longer confined in isolation, and was given things to do (specifically, he was assigned to the prison storehouse, where he was granted broad clerical responsibilities); and it now became easier for his parents to visit him monthly. That said, Pollsmoor was still one of South Africa's largest prison centers, no less rigorous in its observance of the system's stultifying rules (all visits, for example, remained noncontact, through a glass partition), and at the same time a zone of relentless violence and violation.

Now, however, at the insistence of the Afrikaner professoriat, Breyten was allowed to resume writing regularly—though under highly peculiar conditions. He was permitted to write as much as he liked, but he was not allowed to retain anything he wrote, even for purposes of reference or continuity. At the end of each day, the day's production was confiscated "for safekeeping," with the assurance that it would all be returned to him at the end of his sentence. He never knew whether to believe such assurances (in the end, thanks in part to pressure from his lawyers, they were scrupulously observed), but he could have no doubt that in the meantime his every word was being pored over by regime psychologists and security operatives. The guards even confiscated the blotters in his prison-storehouse office each evening to decipher the doodlings on them.

Breyten's was almost a Dadaist endeavor—"a singing death," he once called it. "Writing took on its pure shape, since it had no echo, no feedback, no evaluation, and perhaps ultimately no existence." And yet, even under such circumstances, he managed to produce a body of work of protean vitality, notably including a feverishly enigmatic novel, made up of a series of overlapping short narratives, which he entitled "Mouroir," a typically Breytenbachian invention, ingeniously yoking the French words for "mirror" (*miroir*) and "to die" (*mourir*). His prison poems eventually filled five volumes—and, reading them, one indeed feels a sense of gazing into a dark mirror, with the themes of a lifetime rising up again, oddly inverted. One of the poems begins, "*laybyes and gauntletmen, allow me to take this leave / of Bangai Bird, /the emaciated dream in the green shirt*," and concludes, "*no one is guilty of innocence.*"

The ache of homesickness is again pervasive, but now it is Paris (rather than the Boland) that is being longed for, and it is reunion with Yolande (rather than his parents) that is being conjured with such startling specificity, as in the case of one poem where he mouthwateringly savors a reunion meal of *couscous mouton* for two at a restaurant on the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince.

There are poems of prison life, some of them rendered with lacerating violence. And then there are poems of the Boland, of his youth and his parents and



"February 1, 1983," Breytenbach's first painting after his release from prison.

their old age and his fear that they will die before he's released. There is a particularly beautiful ode to his mother, which ends, "and now you are old, saturated with love and young for ever / like a fruit tree in the soil: / I bear your bones your careening blood / and the singsong sounds of your throat: / *oh mother, bless me before you go!*" The authorities never allowed him to convey that poem to her.

Early in April of 1978, Breyten's mother died of a heart attack while attending the funeral of a friend. The authorities informed Breyten of her death and then posted a round-the-clock watch on his cell and kept the lights on all night so that he was given nowhere to privilege his grief. He applied for permission to attend the funeral, which was denied and then granted and then denied again.

Breyten's father continued to visit him in the months following his mother's death, ramrod straight and increasingly defiant, until one day, two years later and several years before his son's scheduled release, he was felled by a stroke, which left him partly paralyzed and entirely mute.

In September of 1978, Vorster resigned as Prime Minister, and after that the conditions surrounding Breyten's incarceration seemed to lose some of their personal edge. His situation grew increasingly normal, and he committed no more gross blunders. In April of 1982, when Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, the imprisoned leaders of the A.N.C., were transferred to Pollsmoor from Robben Island, it fell to Breyten, in his capacity as storeroom clerk, to outfit their quarters, and he did so with particular zeal, though he didn't meet them at this time.

Prison never stopped being a horror for Breyten. And yet on the far side of that horror Breyten found a kind of peace—in fact, the very peace, in a certain sense, that he had been searching for at the Zen center in Paris. "I didn't go into a prison as a form of spiritual exercise," he once told me. "And, believe me, I wouldn't recommend it as such to anyone. But, what with the scattering of the sense of ego, the abdications forced upon one, the grassroots efforts at survival, I really came to understand for the first time what so much of Zen poetry is about: the acuity of observation, the humbleness and immediacy of beauty." He spoke of "growing rich with the richness of the very poor" and recalled, in particular, what it was like, living in that monochrome universe, when all of a sudden "there'd be this explosion of a toffee wrapper, for instance, or a leaf blew over the wall, or even just a thread, a thread of material drifted up over the wall. You cannot possibly imagine the intensity of the experience. *It was as if you'd never seen color before in your life.* So it was always like that in prison—this simultaneous dulling and sharpening, dulling and sharpening. And somehow I survived."

THE WAKE

(*Pollsmoor Prison, 1978*)

when my mother was dying
I had to flay my way through the seething current
to reach the bedstead where they had laid her out
in the yard: sparkling yellow
the sun stroked the Arcadian scene
playing up the choir of ancient faces of extinct
uncles and forefathers sitting peacefully
sucking pipes to warble smoke,

strong and chipper she was under the white sheet
her eyes luminous and somewhat surprised without the spectacles
her plumpish arms distributing with deliberate gestures
the ultimate messages and blessings
(only the tired gray bun had already come undone):
visions of everything going swimmingly and she
at rest now with inter alia Matthew and Mark left and
right the two old geezers were by Jove standing to,

and she also kept on beckoning me by name
and could not place me at all,

but I had to retrace my steps lest the authorities
get wind of my escape into the current's
quickening whirl I sank
(was this the great drowning?)
to wash up teeth a-chatter lower down between banks
somewhere past farmlands where mud-spattered
grain elevators slash the heavens where haystacks
rot and turnips are gorged down by the turf,

and straining at their leashes I heard the stinking
dogs their throats clogged with the yelping fury of the hunt

—BREYTEN BREYTENBACH

(*Translated, from the Afrikaans, by the author.*)

SURVIVAL was one thing, rescue another—and his rescue Breyten owed to Yolande. Her efforts on his behalf throughout his incarceration were tireless. In Paris, she ran a small boutique near the Beaubourg, specializing in antique clothing. Twice a year, she closed up her little operation and flew to South Africa, staying with Breyten's parents or with Ampie Coetzee or with other friends, visiting Breyten in prison, and endlessly lobbying journalists, cultural figures, and government officials. I have spoken with people who feel certain that prison made Breyten and Yolande's marriage, that before prison Breyten had been lurching personally as well as politically, that it took prison for him to realize what he had in her, and that, conversely, the passionate totality of her commitment on behalf of a relationship that was, at the outset, rickety at best had been a revelation to them both.

During the last years of her crusade on Breyten's behalf, Yolande obtained a powerful ally in Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert, an old Stellenbosch rugby star and contemporary of Breyten's, who had shared the platform with him in 1973 at the Cape Town Sestigers conference, had shortly thereafter entered politics, and had quickly risen to become the head of the otherwise "English"-dominated Progressive Party's parliamentary caucus, which was the regime's principal legitimate anti-apartheid opposition. As such, he regularly locked horns, sometimes ferociously, with the new Prime Minister, P. W. Botha. One of the few things he and Botha shared was a passion for the Afrikaans language, and Slabbert one day capitalized on that to raise the question of Breyten's status.

Partly thanks to Slabbert's efforts, things finally began to move. This was in 1982. Yolande was in South Africa, with a few days left on her visa, when, on the second of December, Breyten got called into the prison director's office and told very brusquely that he was now free, he was being released immediately.

He was handed his various manuscripts—everything in scrupulously good order—and asked to sign for them. He himself was handed over to an Afrikaans-literature professor, a regime man, who had been visiting him on occasion over the years to discuss his poetry, and who, he was now informed, would be serving as his minder over the next several days. The professor lent him the fifty rand to pay off his outstanding fine. Breyten was asked to avoid publicity. The regime would be announcing his release in a few days but had not yet figured out precisely how to do so, and wanted to keep things quiet until then. And, with that, Breyten was shown the gate. The minder drove him to the house of some friends, with whom Yolande was staying. Upon answering the minder's knock, Yolande emerged from the house to find Breyten standing by the car. Ever sensible, her first words were "What are *you* doing *here*?" As Breyten says, "That, of course, was a long story."

After a night together, they agreed to meet at the Johannesburg airport in two days. But first, before leaving, Breyten had an errand to do. While Yolande stayed behind to clear up the loose ends of her seven years of half-life there in Cape Town, Breyten and his minder drove out of town, heading just south of Wellington and then eastward, past the two farms of his childhood, the whole "horrendously beautiful" country rushing by—he was, as he subsequently wrote, "seeing everything for the first time, everything for the last time . . . everything was dying, everything was being reborn"—and on to his sister's house, in Grahamstown. She had been notified, and had brought their father over from a nearby nursing home, where he was now living. He was sitting there in her living room, mute (he hadn't said a word since the stroke) and weeping unashamedly. As Breyten went over to embrace him, he stammered Breyten's name, a few more strangulated syllables, and then quite distinctly he spoke the word "*Klaar!*" (It is *finished!* It is *done!*)

And then it was back to Johannesburg to rejoin Yolande, and back to Jan Smuts Airport. This time, no one was there to detain him for an unintended handshake or an unintended prison sentence: he and Yolande just boarded the airplane and were gone.

BACK in Paris, Breyten began trying to retrieve his life, but doing so turned out to be not nearly so simple as ordering *couscous mouton* for two on the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince. "It can be terribly disrupting being forced out of prison like that, having freedom forced upon you," Breyten explained to me several years later, during our conversations in his Paris studio. "Because it's the opposite of what I was saying the other day about how life inside prison consists of the intensification of experience wrapped inside its mortification. Because now, coming out from that zombified world of prison, I felt I was moving into a different sort of zombified world. It was a complete turnabout. I kept feeling that these people really don't know what life's about. *They don't see the colors, they don't hear the sounds.* It could get to be too much, of course. There was so much more stimulation on the outside that it got to be physically exhausting, and sometimes I almost longed to be back in my cell."

At first, Breyten was reluctant to return to his painting. "I was afraid, because I hadn't painted for seven and a half years," he said. "And with painting, as with music, you worry that if you don't practice it a lot of it goes—a lot of the technical ability. I was really scared in front of that first canvas."

I asked him if he still had that painting. He rummaged around in the back and pulled it out. It was dated "February 1, 1983," and the image, competently rendered in dull grays and browns and blues, consisted of his face in a mirror, bruised and pummelled and haggard, with the eyes closed. I asked him why he had painted himself with his eyes closed, and he replied, "It was all too tender still. I couldn't look at myself yet." (I've often thought about that answer in the years since, and it has seemed ever more magical: He couldn't look at himself, so he painted a picture of himself with his eyes closed. Who/what in such a situation is looking at whom/what? And who are we, where are we, gazing over the shoulder of that regard?)

The act of painting, however, seemed to draw him out, and to heal him. "There was this richness in just basking in the absolute glory of handling brushes and tubes of paint, simply for their own sake," he told me. "And then, of course, there was the hunger for color itself: color quite apart from what it means or any of its associations, just color *as such*—the mad, wonderful yowl of it."

Colors weren't the only mad yowls begging for expression in Breyten's first months out of prison. In May, Yolande and Breyten headed for Palermo, Sicily, where a friend had lent them his apartment for the summer. Breyten took along a tape recorder, and during the ensuing weeks, alone, usually late at night, he proceeded to replicate his interrogations: a darkened room, a bare bulb, the tape spinning. Yolande transcribed the tapes each morning—the exercise was, in part, his way of relating the whole story to her—and the resultant text became the armature for his "True Confessions" ("the implication being that all the other confessions were false," he has commented). "One starts such an exercise hoping to purge the horrors," Breyten told me. "But you never do. At best, you come to some terms—you give the memories a shape."

Breyten's first political impulse, in the months after his return, was to shed his

South African identity and fixations altogether—never to descend into that particular miasma again. Not that there was any clamor by activists eager for his endorsement. He had been burned, but he had done some burning of his own, and it seemed unlikely that there would ever again be a future for him in anti-apartheid work. He applied for full French citizenship, which, owing to patrons in the Mitterrand government, he achieved in an unusually short time. He tried to become a Frenchman, but the graft never quite took, and as time passed he reconnected with his essentially African nature. And now South Africa began coming to him, particularly in the form of Slabbert and a parliamentary colleague of his named Alex Boraine, who regularly flew to Paris and tried to persuade Breyten to reëngage in the anti-apartheid struggle. Instead, he ended up helping to convince them to leave parliament. Their doing so, a few months later, in a highly public manner and amid vivid denunciations of the ineffectuality of the entire parliamentary charade, proved a decided shock to the apartheid regime's comfortable governing consensus.

In June of 1986, Slabbert and Breytenbach converged on the former slave-processing center on Gorée Island, in the harbor of Dakar, Senegal, where an international musical celebration was marking the tenth anniversary of the start of the Soweto uprising (and, incidentally, Breyten's own most ignominious moment: his ambiguous offer to collaborate). It was there that the two men came up with the idea for their most daring initiative yet.

Much of their next year was taken up with its planning and execution (Slabbert and Boraine working secretly inside South Africa, Breyten performing the necessary liaisons with Danielle Mitterrand, the wife of the French president, Senegal's President Abdou Diouf, and various officials of the A.N.C.-in-exile). Astonishingly, their plan went off without a hitch, and in mid-July of 1987 Slabbert led a delegation of sixty prominent Afrikaners—cultural, political, business, and church leaders—out of the country and, via London, back to Gorée for an unprecedented (and highly illegal) meeting with seventeen top leaders of the A.N.C. The event made the front pages of papers all over the world, and especially back in South Africa, where Prime Minister Botha positively sputtered with rage. And though the convocation was by no means all sweetness and light—the conferees wrangled for hours, for example, about the A.N.C.'s continuing commitment to armed resistance—a wall had been breached and the demonized enemy given a face. Slabbert came to think of the Gorée meeting as "the butterfly's wingbeat that precipitated the hurricane." (He subsequently learned from a top Cabinet official that the meeting was what paved the way for F. W. de Klerk's ascension and his subsequent reformist trajectory.) Several years later, Nelson Mandela, for his part, told François Mitterrand at a state dinner in Paris that Gorée had been one of the keys that unlocked the door, making his own release and everything else possible. Breytenbach, back in the thick of things, had been one of the event's key instigators. (For starters, it was entirely Breyten's doing that the event took place in the otherwise anomalous Francophone nation of Senegal.) Breyten himself had been an odd presence at Gorée, not really belonging to either delegation—he

HERE WE GO

(*Pollsmoor Prison, 1982*)

"Ce qui est atroce d'ordinaire avec les gâteaux
c'est qu'on mange toujours le dernier."

laybyes and gauntletmen, allow me to take this leave
of Bangai Bird,
the emaciated dream in the green shirt;
he props up and fondles his wormfat head
and breeds a final poem to bestow on you,
for example:

to come out of hospital you must
be in a coma
dead but wise to the light looming at your lids
how the shadowmoon swims!

run back from the sea
to the labyrinth of loneliness where the mountain
contracts round
the forest the trees are columns of darkness

run the delicate web of hurt
bird-heads tilting with silence gone to pus
dazzled by moon deep in egg eyes
and drizzle that never wets the dust

past neighbors clay dog barking a farmyard
sink to the knees in daze shout get away! shoo!
jailers make an offer they'll ride on with you
but the motorbike sputters and stutters apart
bitter cunning ducks have pecked the outer body through
and the scrawl clots white
look the hands themselves rot

see, he is versed in harmfulness—
would you not rather show him mercy?
the feast of words has been consumed,
no one is guilty of innocence

—Breyten Breytenbach

(*Translated, from the Afrikaans, by the author.*)

was neither any longer a native Afrikaner nor a member of the A.N.C.-in-exile—and, in fact, the entire event represented an edgy, tentative reconciliation between Breyten and the A.N.C. leaders, some of whom may well have been partly responsible for his seven and a half years of incarceration.

In the short run, the Botha regime expressed its displeasure over Breyten's latest antics by slapping him with a series of visa denials—an action that made it impossible for him to revisit his father, who had suffered a new series of heart attacks, until virtually the last moment. (He was eventually allowed to race to his father's deathbed on a four-day visa.) But Breyten remained committed around the country's edges, and in early 1991 he and Yolande were finally allowed back into the rapidly reforming country for a three-month stay. (It was this visit that became the occasion for his latest book, "Return to Paradise.") He remained a prickly customer, however, fiercely independent and at times almost defiantly eccentric in his celebration of the individual in the face of any tendency toward hegemonic control, whether National Party- or A.N.C.-inspired. ("Only anarchy can save us from chaos now" is a typical recent pronouncement.) He even ended up alienating Slabbert at one point by the tenor of his harangues, and the two erupted into a furious public row, which finally subsided in a wrenching private reconciliation. They agreed that it was the country itself gnawing at their innards, and they reaffirmed their love for each other and their status as each other's essential "good brother."

BROTHERS were a recurring theme on my own recent visit to South Africa with Breyten. ("Welcome to the land of sour milk and rancid honey," he quipped as our night flight touched down near dawn at Jan Smuts.) From Johannesburg we flew on to Cape Town and embarked on a few days' drive through the Boland haunts of his youth. The countryside down there *is* ravishingly beautiful, and we meandered through Wellington and Paarl, saw the old farms and the old boarding house and the Taal Monument (still standing), and spoke of his parents and of his brothers. Breyten generally tries to avoid talking about his brothers with journalists; he is almost protective of them. But, amazingly, after everything that has passed between them he still keeps up with them.

We visited Cloete in his summer cottage in Montagu, east of Wellington, on the flank of a fragrant hill overlooking a chaparral valley. Their exchanges were gruff and wary and yet surprisingly warm. (Cloete struck me as wry, cynical, despairing, dark-humored, and ostentatiously contemptuous, though by no means contemptible.) Cloete was talking about selling his cottage, because the country was going all to hell. "So why don't you sell it to me, then, instead of to one of the black comrades?" Breyten teased. "You mean to a white comrade instead of a black one," Cloete retorted, mock-witheringly. Although they didn't talk politics—they seldom do anymore—Cloete told us of his latest incarnation: he was now serving as a top P.R. adviser to Zulu Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party, one of the most obstructionist forces opposed to the country's newly evolving order.

On the road east, past Port Elizabeth, toward his sister's place, in Grahamstown, Breyten called ahead a few times to Jan's retirement homestead, in the nearby hamlet of Salem, trying to obtain his consent to our visit. But Jan had no use for American journalists (frankly, he hadn't had since Suez), and while he said he would welcome a visit from Breyten, Breyten was not to bring me.

"He's really on a rampage," Breyten related after one of these calls. "All worked up, keeps repeating how 'Big Blood's coming, Big Blood's coming.' " Actually, Jan hadn't simply retired from the S.A.D.F.; he had been forced out in 1987 after trying to blow the whistle on its UNITA ally Jonas Savimbi (a man whose career and very life he had personally saved on several occasions) for rapacious and patently illegal trafficking in the tusks and hides of endangered Angolan wildlife species. Jan had discovered how tendrils from the ensuing corruption ran high into the South African military's own top command, and when he tried to go public with his information he was summarily stripped of his commission and banished from his beloved 32 Battalion's base.

Breyten and I spent the night at his sister Rachel's home. We leafed through their mother's photograph albums—meticulously maintained but chronologically delirious. Rachel's fifteen-year-old daughter, Anna-Karien, recalled for us her child's-eye view of Uncle Breyten's incarceration ("I just thought you wanted to be alone") and then recited some of the poems of his she'd been learning at school which had especially moved her.

The next morning, we headed back to the Port Elizabeth airport, but we gave ourselves an extra hour and detoured by way of Salem, which turned

"I feel like Brünnhilde, but in 'The Kentucky Cycle.' "

out to be a tiny hamlet—really just a general store, off to the side of which, up a dusty hill, Jan's farmhouse was perched. Breyten went up to the gate while I stayed behind in the car. A few minutes later, Jan's adult daughter came out to fetch me. "When Father heard you were out here, he insisted I come and get you," she told me. "I mean, he's gruff, but he's not a barbarian—he's actually quite kindhearted and very hospitable." And he was. His British wife had prepared tea out on the back porch (they had been hoping that Breyten would come by, but had almost given up), and Jan was regaling his brother with tales of his new life as a farmer, raising chickens and growing olives. They avoided any talk of politics, and, finally, all Jan seemed to want to talk about was the wildlife in his beloved Caprivi preserve and the royal botch that had been made of that onetime Eden. He had just completed a book on the subject, and he arranged for me to get a copy of the manuscript. The entire hour, as he spoke passionately on the subject, I couldn't help recalling Breyten's wistful speculation about the course that Jan's life might have followed if he had only been born a decade later.

We took our leave and raced back to the Port Elizabeth airport, where Breyten boarded a connecting flight back to Yolande, in their Spanish vacation farmhouse. I was to join them there a bit later, but in the meantime I split off for a few last days in Cape Town. That evening, in my hotel, I leafed through Jan's manuscript and found the experience at once absorbing and profoundly unsettling, for two entirely separate narratives seemed to course side by side through its pages, almost oblivious of each other. One was a tale of unending war and mayhem, of soldierly bonding and heroism amid almost incidental carnage. (The flesh-and-blood substantiality of the enemy or "collateral" deaths, at any rate, never quite seemed to register.) The other was a pastoral rhapsody and a passionate witness to the passing of an Edenic preserve (both brothers are drawn to the imagery of paradises lost and squandered); a celebration of elephants and lions and leopards and buffalo and rhino and of the grandeur of nature untrammelled; and an anguished wail at the systematic evisceration of all that splendor. *That* destruction had clearly got to him. Only near the end of the manuscript, and almost in passing, does he seem to draw the connection. "I am all for a 'just war,' but I also have great difficulty in weighing up the justness of war against the wholesale rape of the last outpost of the African savannah. Savimbi may be a better ruler for Angola than dos Santos will ever be," he writes, referring to the beneficiary of more than twelve years of his government's largesse and his own gruesome exertions. "On the other hand, he may not." He goes on to note how "through a whole string of wars in at least six different African countries" he himself has seldom noted any improvement in governance brought about by violent means, and concludes, "To sacrifice the last stronghold of the African savannah for the precarious 'freedoms' promised by Savimbi, which will go unnoticed by at least eighty per cent of the Angolan population anyway, is to my way of thinking, utterly despicable and an offense against God's creation."

A FEW days later, I joined Breyten and Yolande in a stout stone farmhouse in the hills outside a small town a few hours' train ride north of Barcelona. It was strange the way, after so much far-flung history, the three brothers had managed to secure virtually identical views from their kitchen windows—an overgrown orchard, the swell of shrubby hills in the mid-distance, the wide sky above, an arid valley falling gently away down below.

Yolande was excited: for the first time since girlhood, she had become fascinated by her own roots, and in a few months' time she and a friend were going to be making a trek back to Vietnam. Breyten seemed pleased by the role reversal. Meanwhile, he was busy in a small painting studio he had had built over the garage: during this last South African trip, he had made the final arrangements for an exhibition of his paintings—the first ever in his homeland—to open this December.

Evening was coming on, and Breyten and I were out back, watching the setting sun blond the surrounding hills. I heard a pair of mellow hoots off in the distance. "Owls?" I asked.

"No," Breyten said, smiling. "Wood pigeons, probably. But we do have owls here. And crows. And quail and nightingales. Well, we have everything." From there he free-associated to Pretoria and the birds around the prison, the only outside life he had seen for years. "That's one thing about spending a long stretch in prison," he commented. "You never really get out afterward: part of you is continually being drawn back in."

We were silent a few moments: the sun descended, the light deepened. I asked him whether he ever looked back cringingly on his behavior during those days. "Oh, sure," he said. "There are aspects of my behavior that still leave me appalled. But I also remember that that's what they're continually programming you for—you're being conditioned for self-destruction, they're lacing you with self-disgust, you're being *made guilty*. The whole process is a continual rape of one's own better instincts. So that, sure, it leaves its scar tissue thick across one's sense of self-worth.

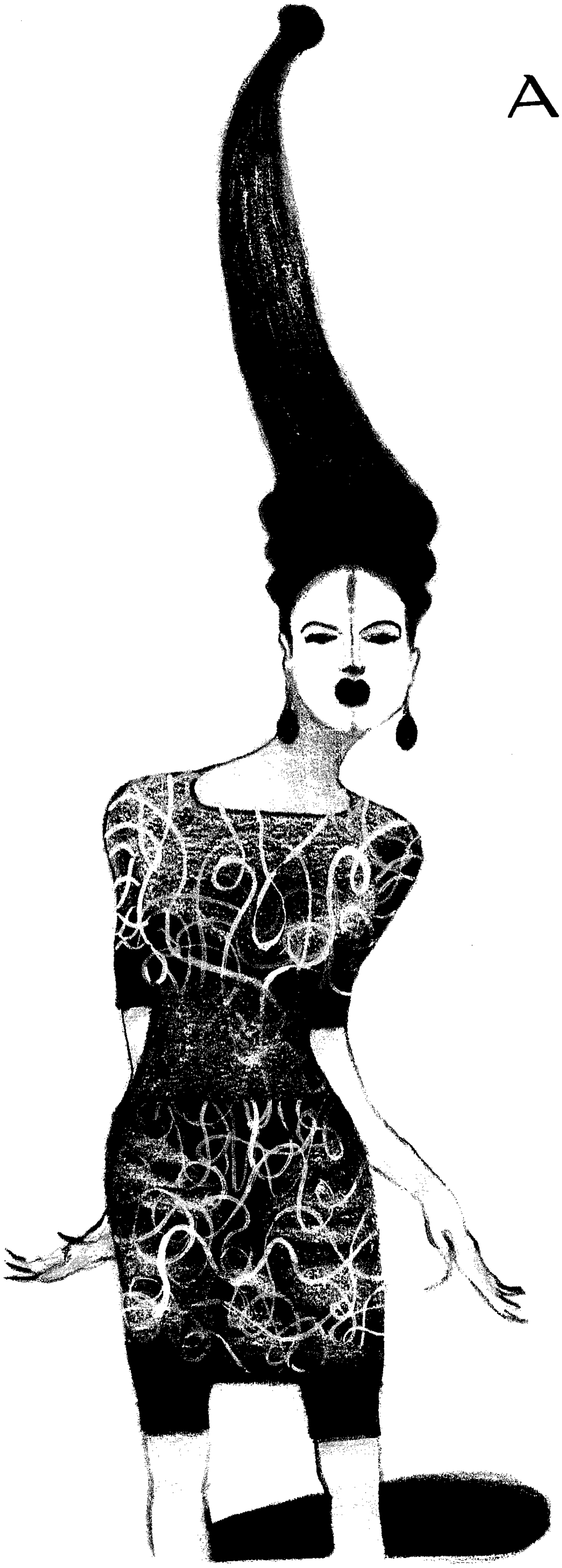
"And yet, in a way, I have more confidence in myself than that. Damn it all, so I wasn't able to be perfect. Self-knowledge is not self-abasement or self-rejection. I was, I am, a flawed human being. But that's more interesting than being an iron cast. And there's something to be said for fucking up. In fact, fucking up, if you aspire to be an artist, may be the great creative principle: getting broken, broken wide open, and then delving among the shards. Moving on. Painting, writing—these are always, first and foremost, struggles for authenticity."

The sun had set and the world had suddenly gone quite dark. We went back inside. Some of his old gallery-show catalogues were strewn across the kitchen table: research for his forthcoming South African exhibition. And one of them happened to be open to the "Family Portrait"—his triple self-portrait. I smiled, pointing to it. "Ah yes," Breyten concurred. "We had a kid here the other day, and he was looking at that picture, and he asked me why the bird-hand of the old man kept bothering the little boy." He laughed. "I liked that." I asked him how he himself felt about that picture nowadays. "Oh," he said, "you know how it is. That's me, dead at the age of nine. Me, dead at the age of thirty. Me, dead at the age of forty. . . ." (The rumble seat, the goldfish pond, the field plowed under.) "I have sympathy for all of them, as I do for any dead. But they are not me." ♦

DOWN THE RUNWAYS

ALL ABOUT WOMEN

BY INGRID SISCHY



The Karl Lagerfeld Skindress.

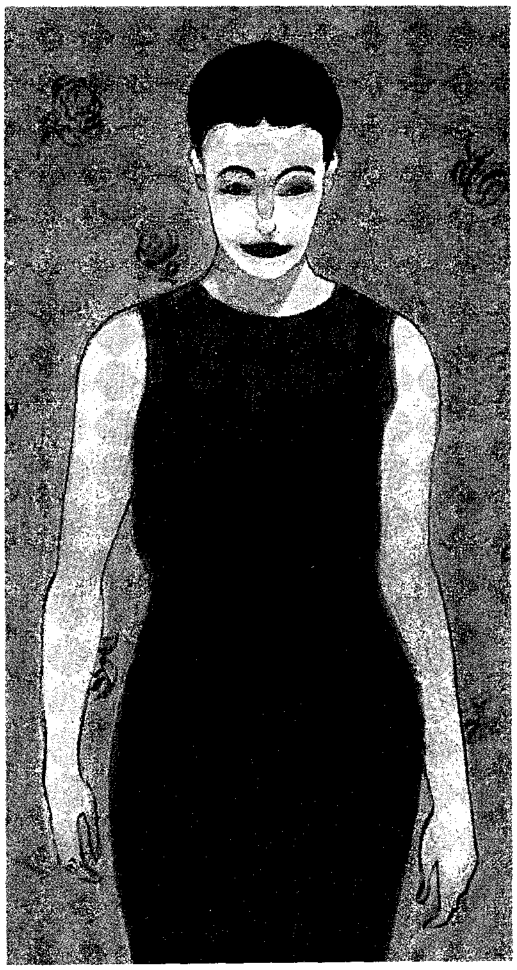
AT this year's European collections, not all the notable walks down the runway were executed by the models. There were others, too. To be reminded of what the Paris shows used to be like, you went to see Sonia Rykiel's. The aroma of perfume whooshed through the air, and so did a desire for chicness, and for va va va voom. Breasts were still a commodity. They bounced as the models swivelled their hips like Slinkies. No stunned, Thorazined look for Rykiel! And, at the show's end, there she was, parading down the runway with a purposeful stride. None of the boundaries that kept women from making it had stopped this dame. And she had something special up her well-cut sleeve—Robert Altman. He ankled up the runway to the microphone, here to announce what had been the buzz for months—that he was working on "Prêt-à-Porter," a new film inspired by an old Rykiel show, one that he saw ten years ago. Director and designer stood side by side. Altman, suddenly glamorous, talked about having Anouk Aimee and Marcello Mastroianni, among others, in the film. Rykiel exuded a pride that said, "My competitors be damned."

Hollywood and Paris also walked down the aisle together at the Valentino show, which provided a scene that ought to be in Altman's movie. The Valentino people had got themselves a blockbuster to walk their runway. Their coup had been telegraphed, and anticipation rippled through the audience as the finale approached. At last, Sharon Stone peeped out from the back of the runway, as if from behind a shower curtain. Then she revealed all she had, and all she had on: a white wedding dress so short and so sporty that the bride wouldn't need to change into lingerie on the big night, or even for tennis the next

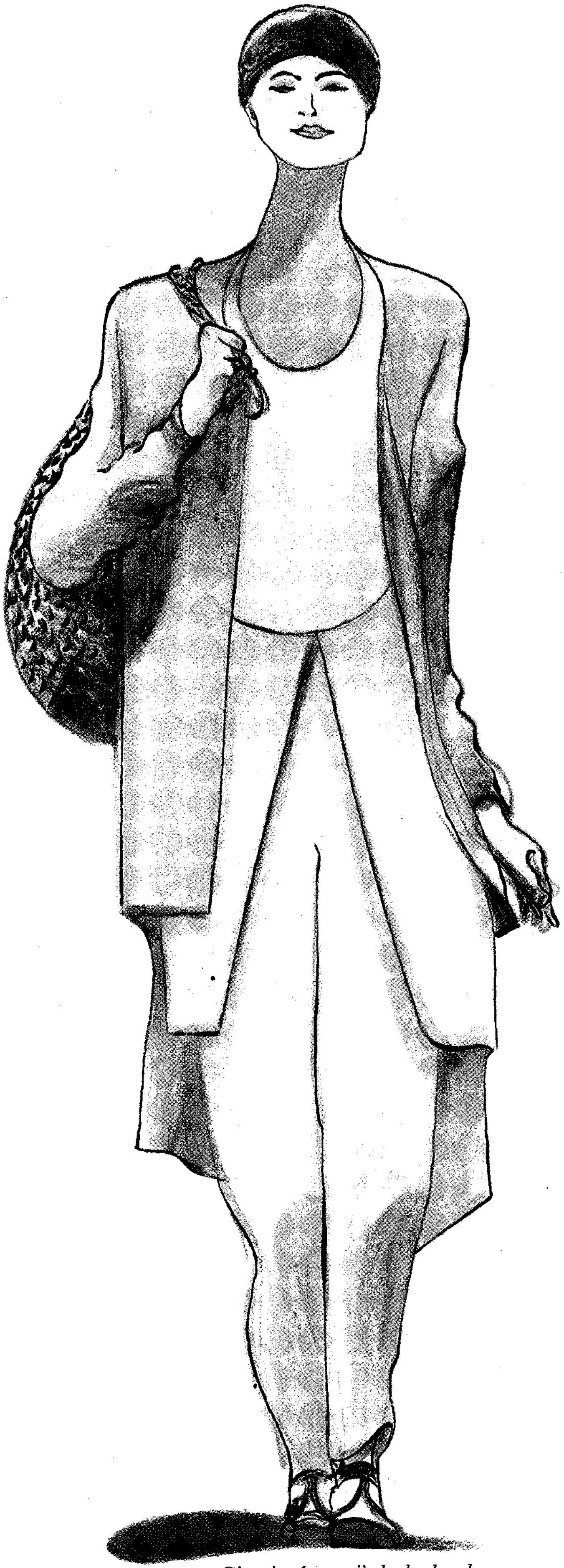
DRAWINGS BY LORENZO MATTOTTI

morning. Stone's movement down the runway began with a shimmy and turned into one long curtsy. It was intriguing, but the models, who stood in a line watching, provided a counterpoint no less entertaining. When the star made her entrance and the crowd cheered, they seemed a bit unsure. Then, once she showed that she didn't have "the walk," they projected pure attitude. It went something like this—"She may have stolen the finale, but she ain't about to steal our jobs." It was a sly series of looks and smiles among themselves, with just a hint of benevolent condescension—and as charming in its own way as Stone. It was revealing in terms of basic instinct, too. Movie stars are about "Love me"; models are about "Buy me."

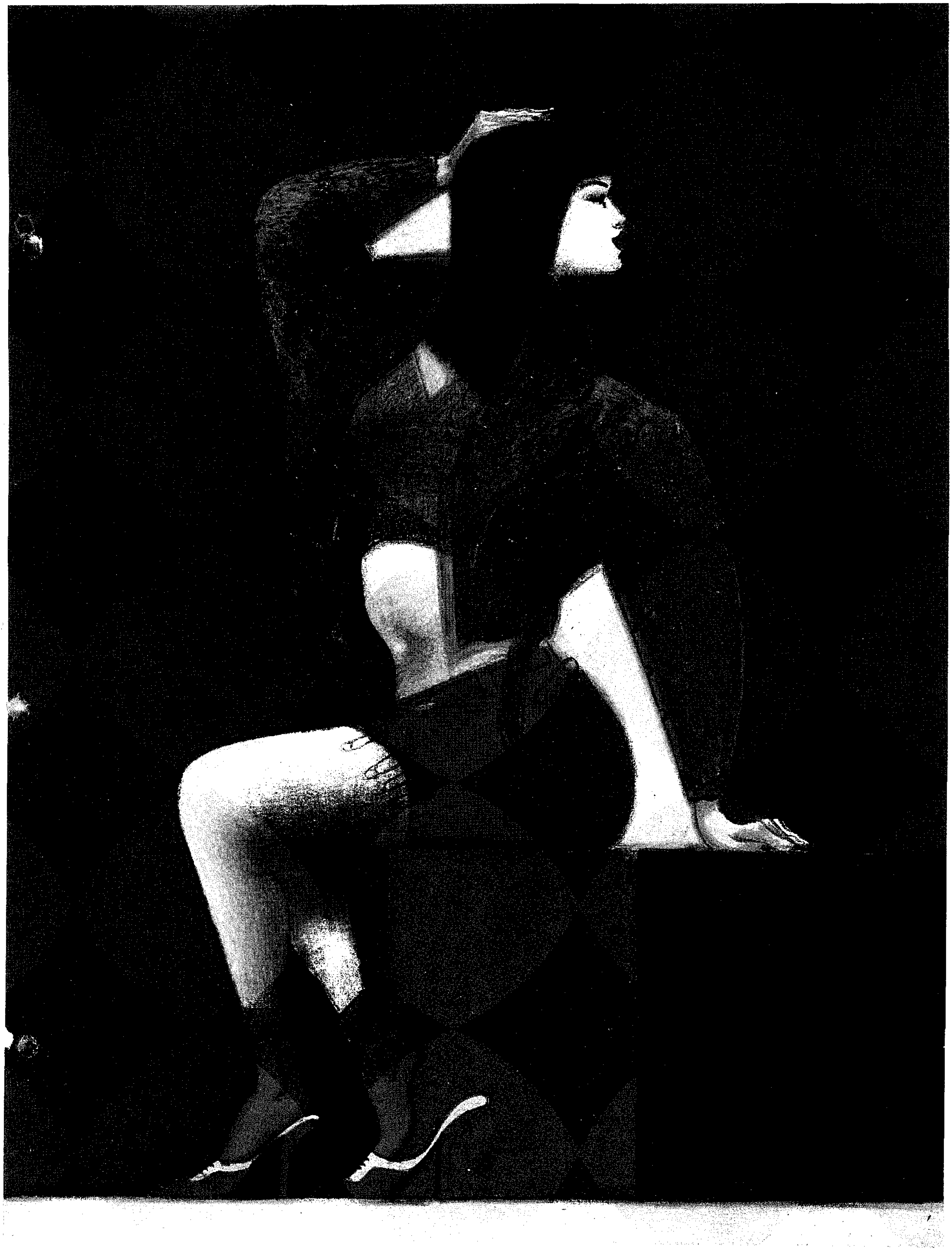
There was another expectant moment at the close of the Yves Saint Laurent show. His afflictions and his past stumblings on the runway have become lore in the fashion world, and the very fact of his continued existence is treated as something miraculous and spooky. Would his presence remain in the air, like a scent, or would he appear bodily? Like Stone, Saint Laurent peeked out from behind



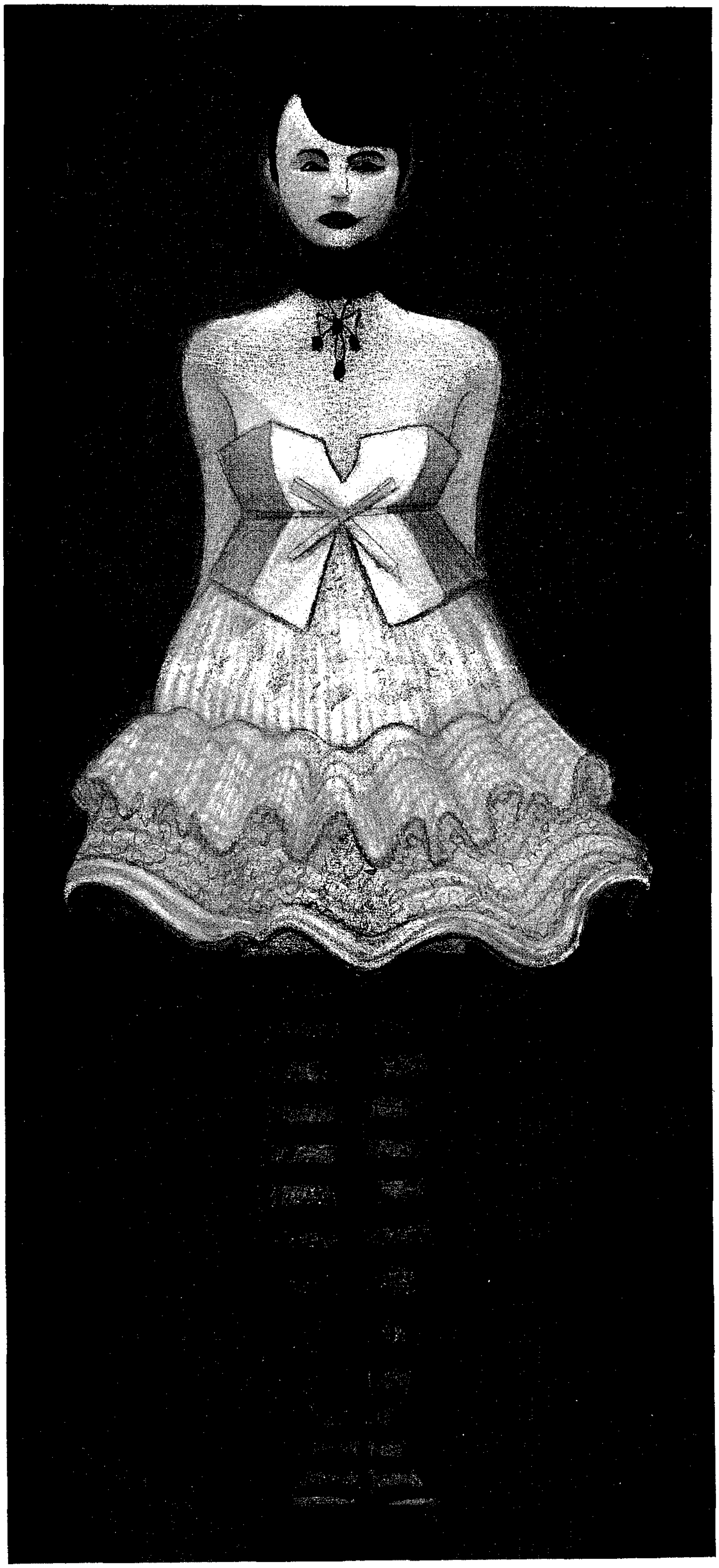
Dries Van Noten's soulfulness.



Giorgio Armani's look ahead.



Gianni Versace's "sock it to 'em."



Christian Lacroix's look back.

the temporary wall at the mouth of the runway. But he did it as a child at his parents' dinner party might, testing whether they'd let him enter the room or yell, "Yves! Back to bed!" When the audience spotted Saint Laurent, half hidden, its applause seemed to coax him into full view. He took courage from this welcome and walked down the runway by himself, slowly, his smile getting bigger and bigger. When he made it to the end, he was exultant. There was a standing ovation for the fact that he had done it alone.

FASHION is war. There are skirmishes between designers, between photographers, between hairdressers, between models and their former agents. By the time the shows begin, the designers are at the end of a gruelling marathon, and maybe their revenge is how tough it is to get in to their presentations at all. Entering the shows even if you have an invitation can be a real test of valor under fire. You need a guerrilla cunning to be a crasher. But then crashers are the best gauges of what's exciting. After seeing one young woman, from a small fashion house in Hamburg, charge her way victoriously into the Helmut Lang show in Paris and then watch it with visible respect and appreciation, I asked her what other shows she had scaled the barricades for. "Two days ago, I *had* to see Comme des Garçons," she said. "Today, *of course*, there's Gaultier. Tomorrow, Martine Sitbon. Then I must go home." Not Christian Lacroix? "No. He's not a trendsetter."

A tough review, maybe, but precise. In Paris and Milan last month, the news was definitely not about froufrou. It was about women, though, and about the fact that many of our lives influenced what was on the runways this time, instead of the other way around. In both cities, the strongest fashion was layered, literally and figuratively. Many of the images on the runways made one's thoughts turn to the bedroom, the schoolroom, the hospital room, the sewing room; to craziness, to being stuck, to clarity, to rebellion, to fantasy, and to selfhood.

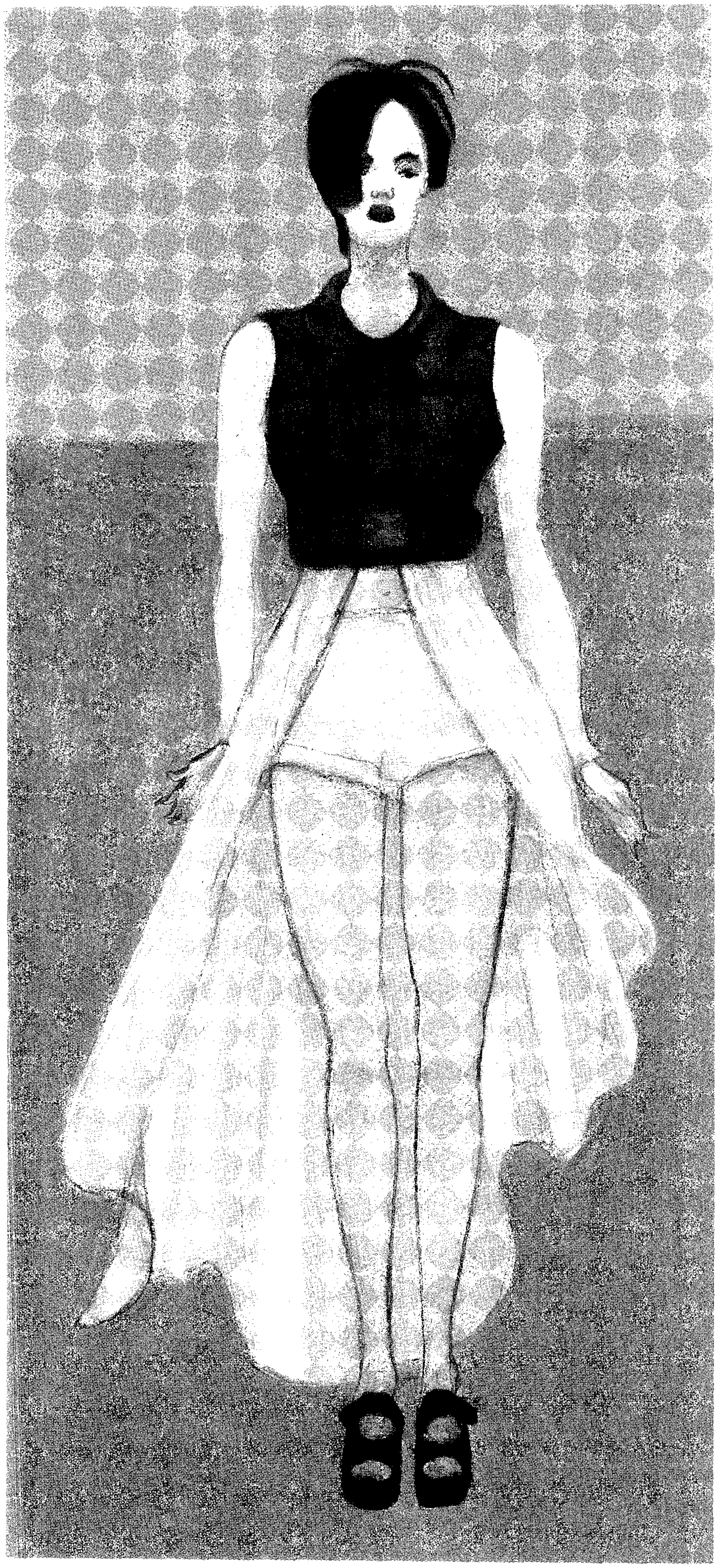
There were slips and lingerie ad infinitum. Jil Sander turned slips into something perfect that a woman puts on to please herself, not her man; Gianni Versace punked them up into forms as dynamic as Lucio Fontana's abstract paintings of the sixties. As an antidote to all this body brassiness, he defiantly prescribed socks, lots of socks, the symbol of mundane coziness. So did Miuccia Prada, who started her show with a section titled "The Bride and the Widow," and a see-through black slip dress that sent shivers down the spine for how it simultaneously evoked innocence and loss. The most forward-looking fashion invited us to see through the clothes. No one did this more radically than Karl Lagerfeld, who took transparency to such extremes for his signature line (which was inspired by the revolutionary art of the late Eva Hesse) that a common first reaction was that the emperor of fashion had put on a show that had no clothes.

The nuttiness that we all have within us punctuated the shows. So did a definite consciousness of the devastation of AIDS—which was the subject of Franco Moschino's finale. Suggestions of hospital-fresh whites and straitjacketing popped up at Dries Van Noten's, which was set up in a way reminiscent of a makeshift ward, with rows and rows of mats on the floor. Such references to the larger world were reflected by a basic theme: the tension between being held in and being set free. Here the radicals, as usual, were the Japanese (whose influence could be detected at many of the shows, especially those of the Northern European designers). Yohji Yamamoto and Comme des Garçons's Rei Kawakubo have always featured eccentricity. This year, Kawakubo's most operatic numbers were presented with turkey feathers shooting like projectiles from the models' heads. These dresses were made from the simplest ingredients and techniques of the sewing room—muslin, tape, bonding, ironing. When I visited the Comme des Garçons showroom to get a closer look at some of the other clothes, I pointed to a long object and asked, "Is it a dress? Or a coat?"

"It's a jacket" was the answer. Of course, Kawakubo has always played with definitions, but now it's directed to an even more enigmatic end.

How logical that just at the moment deconstruction enters the mainstream, to the point that we wince when we hear the word again, mystery returns to fashion. That mystery was very much in evidence at the Giorgio Armani show, whose complicated simplicity, so full of beauty and atmosphere, left the crowd speechless. One article of clothing on top of another on top of another, many of them resisting any exact definition, turned these wholes into visions rather than merely gorgeous outfits.

Idealism took a more direct form at Gaultier. He somehow managed to provide an optimistic view of a coexisting world without being sentimental, pedantic, or banal. Perhaps that's because he understands how tribal we all are—and instead of trying to wash



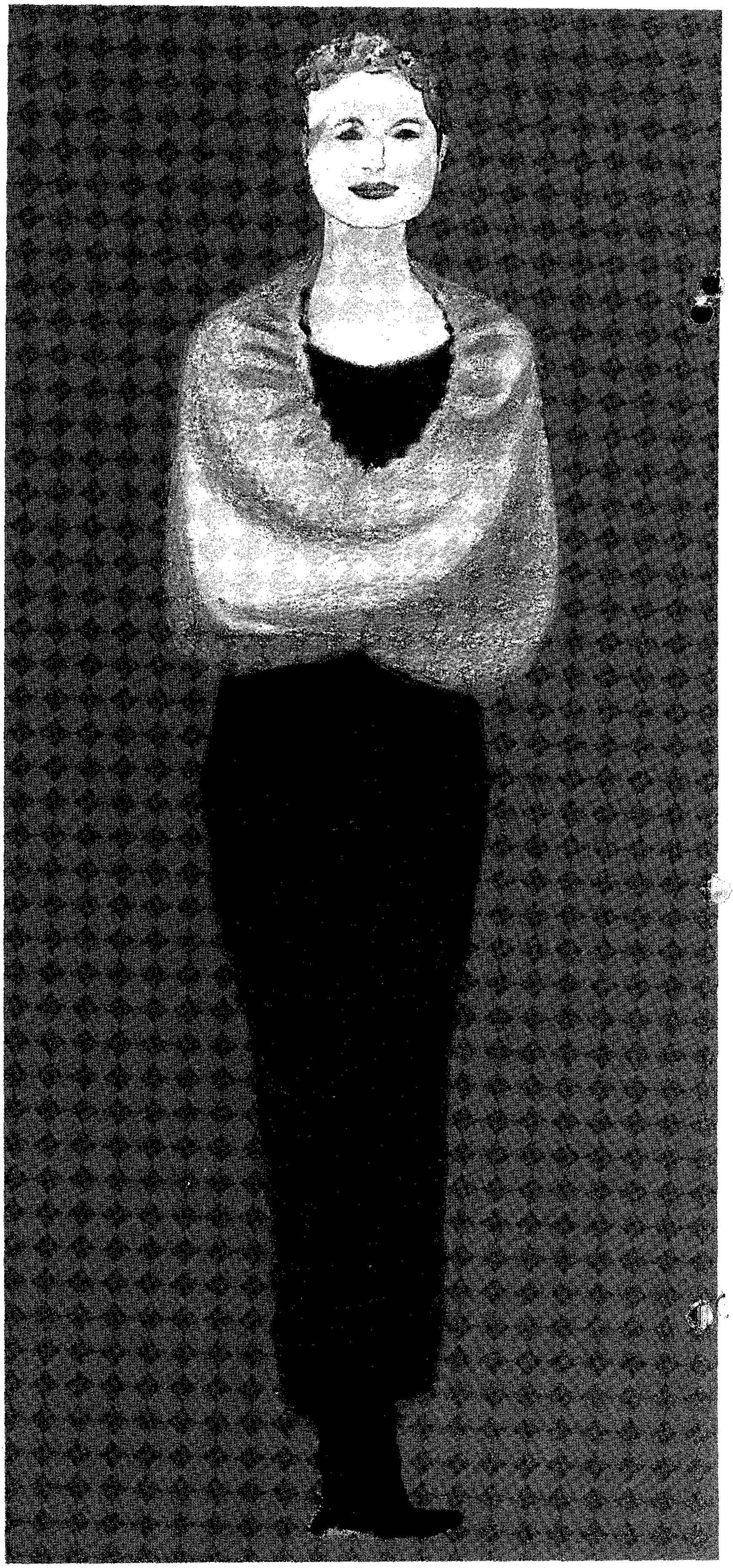
Miuccia Prada's innocent sophistication.

out our differences he celebrates them. This round, he made fashion love to India, Africa, Scotland, French fashion, tattoo parlors, and more, without losing the strength of each of his elements. Here again you couldn't tell exactly what was on the models, but a perpetuation of history it wasn't. For instance, there were jackets with bra cups for elbow patches.

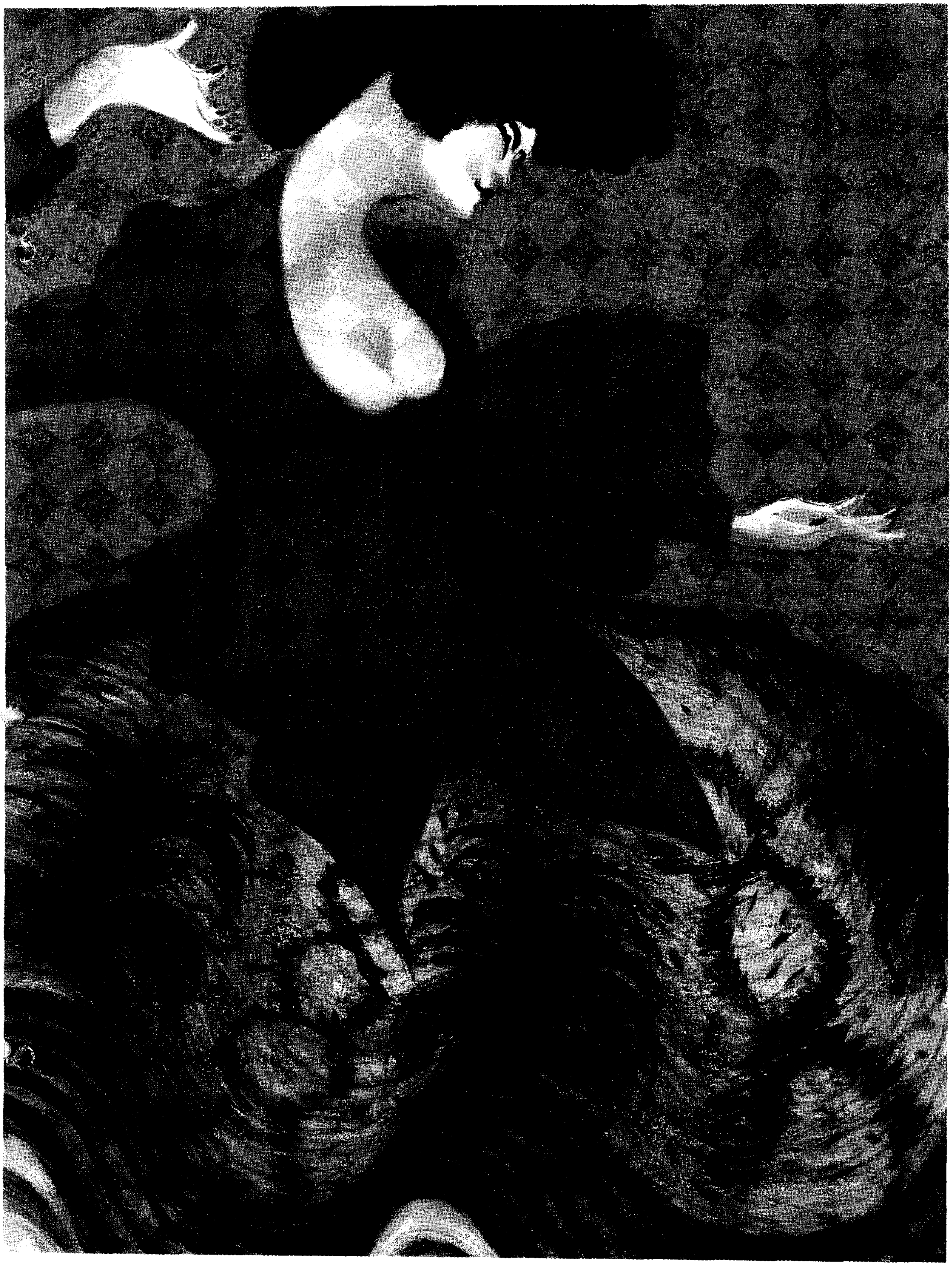
We may not be ready to wear these clothes, or want to wear them, or be able to afford them. We may not even be able to find them. Quite a bit of what is shown and photographed at the European collections will never show up in a store at all, either because the designers don't reproduce it or because the retail buyers don't think it will sell. During one show, Steven Meisel, the fashion photographer, leaned over to me and whispered, "Nice, but where do we get that? I haven't bought a new coat in years. I *think* I see something on the runways, and then I go and try to find it and it's not there."

In fact, a number of designers had played with what to do when faced with a state of clotheslessness. At Chloé, some of the memory-inducing dresses that Karl Lagerfeld had designed looked like old lace tablecloths that had been recycled, never mind the rips. In any case, to Lagerfeld the rips *were* the frills. On the eve of the show, he realized that the dresses' untouchable exquisiteness made them less human than he wanted them to be. He asked the seamstress to take out her scissors. He was right. The image of having lived through something was what resonated.

Leave it to the Brits to make the best out of hard times. There were signs of economic pressure at many of the shows, but it was England's John Galliano and Vivienne Westwood who did it with Scarlett O'Hara's curtains: at moments, their models appeared to be wearing elaborate drapes that had been pulled down and wrapped into dresses, out of necessity and great imagination. Galliano used telephone wire as the understructure for his lollapalooza giant skirts. How many women have responded to their circumstances in a similar vein at one time or another? And how many men? In that same conversation with Meisel, we'd got to talking about the gorgeously theatrical way a fashion editor had been dressed the night before. "He looked like he had on the Ritz," Meisel said. Tassels and all. And, after a moment, added, "At least you know where he got it." ♦



Comme des Garçons's disarming arming.



Vivienne Westwood's new twist.

FICTION

WHICH IS MORE THAN I CAN SAY ABOUT SOME PEOPLE

BY LORRIE MOORE

IT was a fear greater than death, according to the magazines. Death was No. 4. After mutilation, three, and divorce, two. No. 1, the real fear, the one death could not even approach, was public speaking. Abby Mallon knew this too well. Which is why she had liked her job at American Scholastic Tests: she got to work with words in a private way. The speech she made was done in the back, alone, like little shoes cobbled by an elf: Spider is to web as weaver is to *blank*. That one was hers. She was proud of that.

Also, *blank* is to heartache as forest is to bench.

But then, one day, the supervisor and the A.S.T. district coördinator called her upstairs. She was good, they said, but perhaps she had become *too* good, too *creative*, they suggested, and gave her a promotion out of the composing room and into the high-school auditoriums of America. She would have to travel and give speeches, tell high-school faculty how to prepare students for the entrance exams, meet separately with the juniors and seniors and answer their questions unswervingly, with authority and grace. "You may have a vacation first," they said, and handed her a check.

"Thank you," she said doubtfully. In her life she had been given the gift of solitude, a knack for it, but now it would be of no professional use. She would have to become a people person.

"A *peeper* person?" queried her mother, on the phone from Pittsburgh.

"*People*," said Abby.

"Oh, those," said her mother, and she sighed the sigh of death, though she was strong as a brick.

OF all Abby's fanciful ideas for self-improvement (the inspirational video, the breathing exercises, the hypnosis class) the Blarney Stone, with its whoring barter of eloquence for love—"O gift of gab" read the T-shirts—was perhaps the most extreme. Perhaps. There had been, after all, her marriage to Bob, her boyfriend of many years, after her dog, Randolph, had died of kidney failure and marriage to Bob seemed the only way to overcome her grief. Of course, she had always admired the idea of marriage, the citizenship and public speech of it, the innocence rebestowed, and Bob was big and comforting. But he didn't have a lot to say. He was not a verbal man. Rage gave him syntax—but it just wasn't enough! Soon Abby had begun to keep him as a kind of pet, while she quietly looked for distractions of depth and consequence. She looked for words. She looked for ways with words. She worked hard to befriend a lyricist from New York—a tepid, fair-haired, violet-eyed bachelor. She and most of the doctors' wives and arts administrators in town. He was newly arrived, owned no car, and wore the same tan blazer every day. "Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink," said the bachelor lyricist once, listening wanly to the female chirp of his phone messages. In his apartment there were no novels or bookcases. There was one chair, a large television set, the phone machine, a rhyming dictionary continually renewed from the library, and a coffee table. Women brought him meals, professional introductions, jingle commissions, and cash grants. In return, he brought them small, piebald stones from the beach, or pretty weeds from the park. He would stand behind the coffee table and recite his own songs, then step back and wait fearfully to be seduced. To be lunged at and devoured by the female form was, he believed, something akin to applause. Sometimes he would produce a rented lute and say, "Here, I've just composed a melody to go with my 'Creation' verse. Sing along with me."

And Abby would stare at him and say, "But I don't know the tune. I haven't heard it yet. You just made it up, you said."

Oh, the vexations endured by a Man of Poesy! He stood paralyzed behind the coffee table, and when Abby didn't last step forward, just to touch him, to take his pulse, perhaps, *to capture one of his arms in an invisible blood-pressure cuff!* he crumpled and shrank. "Please don't think I'm some kind of emotional Epstein-Barr," he said, quoting from other arguments he'd had with women. "I'm not indifferent or dispassionate. I'm calm. I'm romantic, but I'm calm. I have appetities, but I'm very calm about them."

When Abby went back to her husband ("Honey, you're home!" Bob exclaimed), she lasted only a week. Shouldn't it have lasted longer—the mix of loneliness and lust and habit she always felt with Bob, the mix that was surely love, for it so often felt like love, how could it not be love, surely nature intended it to be, surely nature with its hurricanes and hail was counting on this to suffice? Bob smiled at her and said nothing. And the next day she booked a flight to Ireland.

HOW her mother became part of the trip, Abby still couldn't exactly recall. It had something to do with a stick shift: how Abby had never learned to drive one. "In my day and age," said her mother, "everyone learned. We all learned. Women had skills. They knew how to cook and sew. Now women have no skills."

The stick shifts were half the rental price of the automatics.

"If you're looking for a driver," hinted her mother, "I can still see the road."

"That's good," said Abby.

"And your sister Theda's spending the summer at your aunt's camp again." Theda had Down's syndrome, and the family adored her. Every time Abby visited, Theda would shout, "Look at you!" and throw her arms around her in a terrific hug. "Theda's, of course, sweet as ever," said her mother, "which is more than I can say about some people."

"That's probably true."

"I'd like to see Ireland while I can. Your father, when he was alive, never wanted to. I'm Irish, you know."

"I know. One-sixteenth."

"That's right. Of course, your father was Scottish, which is a totally different thing."

Abby sighed. "It seems to me that *Japanese* would be a totally different thing."

"*Japanese*?" hooted her mother. "Japanese is close."

AND so in the middle of June they landed at the Dublin airport together. "We're going to go all around this island, every last peninsula," said Mrs. Mallon, in the airport parking lot, revving the engine of their rented Ford Fiesta, "because that's just the kind of crazy yuppies we are."

Abby felt sick from the flight, and sitting on what should have been the driver's side but didn't have a steering wheel suddenly seemed emblematic of something.

Her mother lurched out of the parking lot and headed for the nearest roundabout, crossing into the other lane only twice. "I'll get the hang of this," she said. She pushed her glasses farther up on her nose, and Abby could see for the first time that her mother's eyes were milky with age. Her steering was jerky, and her foot jumped around on the floor, trying to find the clutch. Perhaps this had been a mistake.

"Go straight, Mom," said Abby, looking at her map.

They zigged and zagged to the north, up and away from Dublin, planning to return there at the end, but now heading toward Drogheda and the N1, Abby snatching up the guidebook and then the map again and then the guidebook, and Mrs. Mallon shouting, "What?" or "Left?" or "This can't be right, let me see that thing." The Irish countryside opened up before them, its pastoral patchwork and stone walls and chimney aroma of turf fires like something from another century, its small stands of trees, and fields populated with wildflowers and sheep dung and cut sod and cows with ear tags, beautiful as women. Perhaps fairy folk lived in the trees! Abby saw immediately that to live amidst the magic feel of this place would be necessarily to believe in magic. To live here would make you superstitious, warmhearted with secrets, unrealistic. If you were literal, or practical, you would have to move—or you would have to drink.

They drove uncertainly past signs to places unmarked on the map. They felt lost—but not in an uncharming way. The old, narrow roads with their white markers reminded Abby of the vacations her family had taken when she was little, the cow-country car trips through New England or Virginia—in those days before there were interstates or plastic cups or a populace depressed by asphalt and French fries. Ireland was a trip into the past of America. It was years behind, unmarred, like a story or a dream or a clear creek. I'm a child again, Abby thought. I'm back. And just as when she was a child, she suddenly had to go to the bathroom.

"I have to go to the bathroom," she said. To their left was a sign that said "Road Works Ahead" and underneath someone had scrawled, "No, it doesn't."

Mrs. Mallon veered the car over to the left and slammed on the brakes. There were some black-faced sheep, haunch-marked with bright blue, munching grass near the road.

"Here?" asked Abby.

"I don't want to waste time stopping somewhere else and having to buy something. You can go behind that wall."

"Thanks," said Abby, groping in her pocketbook for Kleenex. Already she missed her own house. She missed her neighborhood. She missed the plentiful U-Pump-'Ems, where, she often said, at least they spelled "pump" right! She got out and hiked back down the road a little way. On one of the family road trips thirty years ago, when she and Theda had had to go to the bathroom, their father had stopped the car and told them to "go to the bathroom in the woods." They had got out and wandered through the woods for twenty minutes, looking for the bathroom, before they came back out to tell him that they hadn't been able to find it. Their father had looked perplexed, then amused, and then angry—his usual pattern.

Now Abby struggled over a short stone wall and hid, squatting, eying the sheep warily. She was spacey with jet lag, and when she got back to the car she realized she'd left the guidebook on a stone and had to turn around and retrieve it.

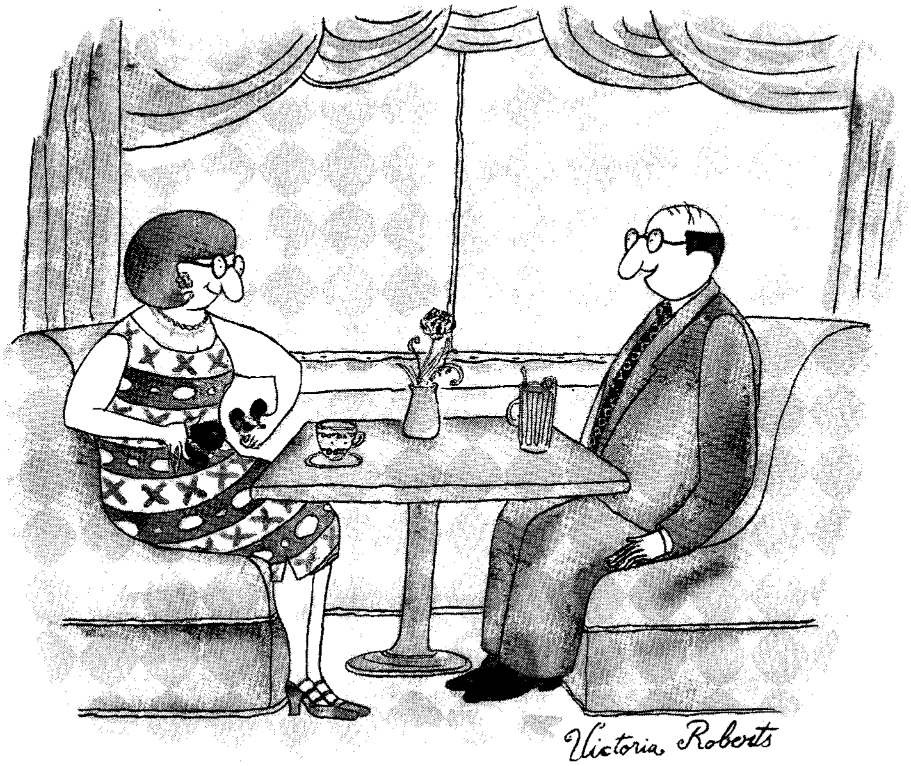
"There," she said, getting back in the car.

Mrs. Mallon shifted into gear. "I always feel that if people would just be like animals and excrete here and there rather than in a single agreed-upon spot, we wouldn't have any pollution."

Abby nodded. "That's brilliant, Mom."

"Is it?"

They stopped briefly at an English



"You play the castanets very well."

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manor house, to see the natural world cut up into moldings and rugs, wool and wood captive and squared, the earth stolen and embalmed and shellacked. Abby wanted to leave. "Let's leave," she whispered.

"What is it with you?" complained her mother. From there they visited a Neolithic passage grave, its design like a birth in reverse, its narrow stone corridor spilling into a high, round room. They took off their sunglasses and studied the Celtic curlicues. "Older than the pyramids," [illegible]nounced the guide, though he failed to address its most important feature, Abby felt: its deadly maternal metaphor.

"Are you still too nervous to cross the border to Northern Ireland?" asked Mrs. Mallon.

"Uh-huh." Abby bit at her thumbnail, tearing the end of it off like a tiny twig.

"Oh, come on," said her mother. "Get a grip."

And so they crossed the border into the north, past the flak-jacketed soldiers patrolling the neighborhoods and barbed wire of Newry: young men holding automatic weapons and walking backward, block after block; their partners across the street, walking forward, on the watch. Helicopters flapped above. "This is a little scary," said Abby.

"It's all show," said Mrs. Mallon breezily.

"It's a scary show."

"If you get scared easily."

Which was quickly becoming the theme of their trip—Abby could see that already. That Abby had no courage and her mother did. And that it had been that way forever.

"You scare too easily," said her mother. "You always did. When you were a child, you wouldn't go into a house unless you were reassured that there were no balloons in it."

"I didn't like balloons."

"And you were scared on the plane coming over," said her mother.

Abby grew defensive. "Only when the flight attendant said there was no coffee because the percolator was broken. Didn't you find that alarming? And then, after all that slamming, they still couldn't get one of the overhead bins shut." Abby remembered this as if it were a distant, bitter memory, though it had only been yesterday. The plane had taken off with a terrible shudder, and when it proceeded with the rattle of an old subway car, particularly over Greenland, the flight attendant had gotten on the address system to announce that there was nothing to worry about, "especially when you think about how heavy air really is."

Now her mother thought she was Tarzan. "I want to go on that rope bridge I saw in the guidebook," she said.

On page 98 in the guidebook was a photograph of a rope-and-board bridge slung high between two cliffs. It was supposed to be for fishermen, but tourists were allowed, though they were cautioned about strong winds.

"Why do you want to go on the rope bridge?" asked Abby.

"*Why*?" replied her mother, who then seemed stuck and fell silent.

FOR the next two days, they drove east and to the north, skirting Belfast, along the coastline, past old windmills and sheep farms, and up onto vertiginous cliffs that looked out toward Scotland, a pale sliver on the sea. They stayed at a tiny stucco bed-and-breakfast, one with a thatched roof like Cleopatra bangs. They slept lumpily, and in the morning, in the breakfast room with its large front window, they ate their cereal and rashers and black-and-white pudding in an exhausted way, going through the motions of good guesthood. "Yes, the troubles," they agreed, for who could say for certain to whom you were talking? It wasn't like race-riven America, where you always knew. Abby nodded. Out the window there was a breeze, but she couldn't hear the faintest rustle of it. She could only see it silently moving the dangling branches of the sun-sequinned spruce, just slightly; it was like looking at objects hanging from a rearview mirror in someone else's car.

She charged the bill to her Visa, tried to lift both bags, and then lifted just her own.

"Goodbye! Thank you!" she and her mother called to their host. Back in the car, briefly, Mrs. Mallon began to sing "Toora-loora-looral." "Over in Killarney, many years ago," she warbled. Her voice was husky, vibrating, slightly flat, coming in just under each note like a saucer under a cup.

And so they drove on. The night before, the whole day ahead could have shape and design. But when it was upon you, it could vanish tragically into air.

They came to the sign for the rope bridge.

"I want to do this," said Mrs. Mallon, and swung the car sharply right. They crunched into a gravel parking lot and parked; the bridge was a quarter-mile walk from there. In the distance dark clouds roiled like a hemorrhage, and the wind was picking up. Rain mizzled the windshield.

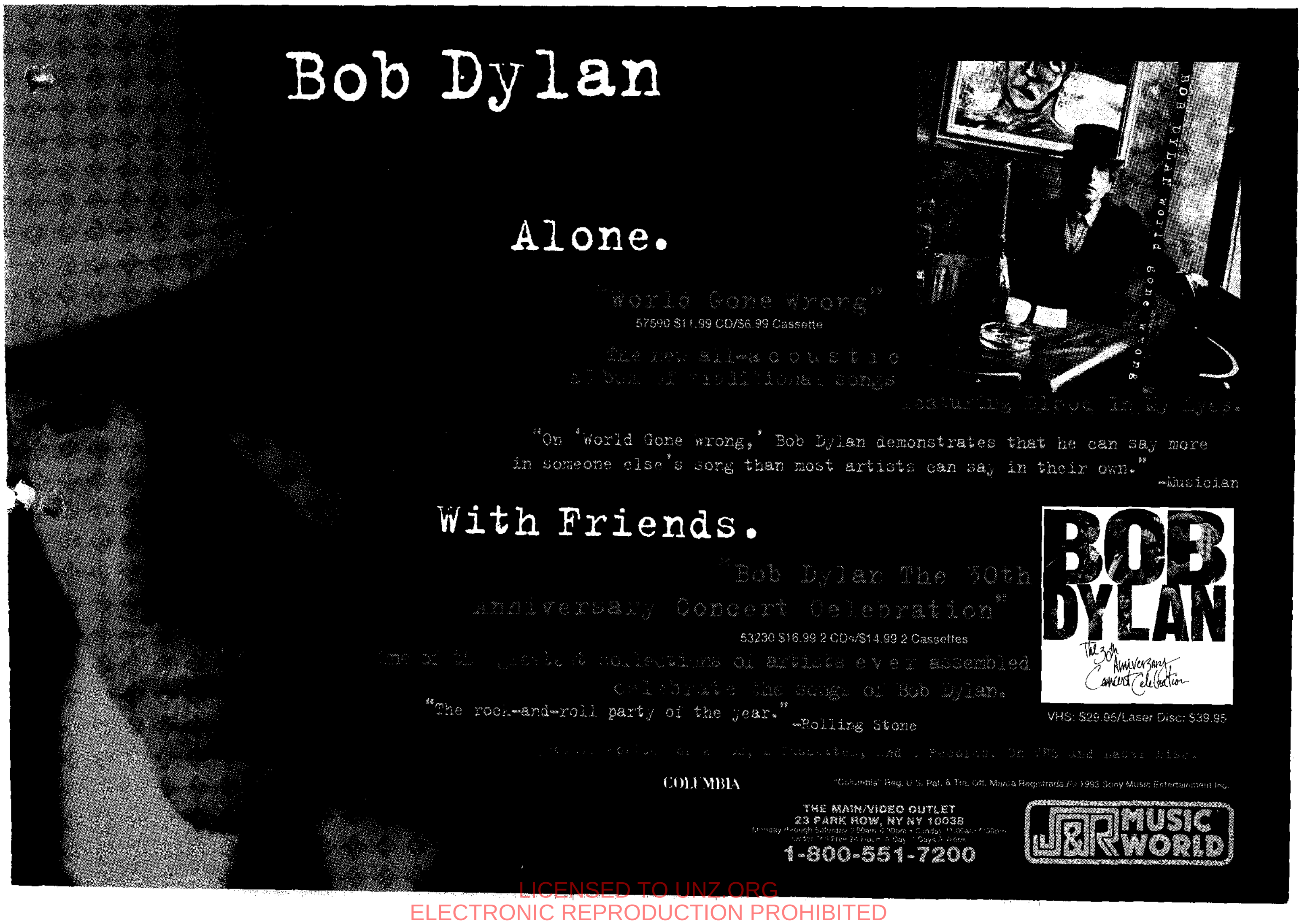
"I'm going to stay here," said Abby.

"You are?"

"Yeah."

"Whatever," said her mother in a disgusted way, and she got out scowling and trudged down the path to the bridge, disappearing beyond a curve.

Abby waited, now feeling the true loneliness of this trip. She realized she missed Bob and his warm, quiet confusion; how he sat on the rug in front of the fireplace, where her dog Randolph used to sit; sat there beneath the five Christmas cards they'd received, and placed on the mantle—five including the one from the paperboy—sat there picking at his feet or naming all the fruits in his fruit salad, remarking life's great vari-



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ety or asking what was wrong (in his own silent way) while poking endlessly at a smoldering log. She thought, too, about poor Randolph, at the vet with his patchy fur and begging, dying eyes. And she thought about the pale bachelor lyricist, how he had once come to see her, and how he hadn't even placed enough pressure on the doorbell to make it ring, and so had stood there waiting on the porch, holding a purple coneflower, until she just happened to walk by the front-room window and see him standing there. *O poetry!* When she invited him in, and he gave her the flower and sat down to decry the coded bloom and doom of all things, decry as well his own unearned deathlessness, how everything hurtles toward oblivion except words, which assemble themselves in time like molecules in space, for God was an act—an act!—of language, it hadn't seemed silly to her, not really, at least not *that* silly.

The wind was gusting. She looked at her watch, worried now about her mother. She turned on the radio to find a weather report, though the stations all seemed to be playing strange, redone versions of American pop songs from 1970. Every so often there was a two-minute quiz show—Who is the president of France? Is a tomato a vegetable or a fruit?—questions that the callers rarely if ever answered correctly, which made the show quite embarrassing to listen to. Why did they do it? Puzzles, quizzes, game shows. Abby knew from A.S.T. that a surprising percentage of those taking the college-entrance exams never actually applied to college. People just loved a test. Wasn't that true? People loved to put themselves to one.

Her mother was now knocking on the glass. She was muddy and wet. Abby unlocked the door and pushed it open. "Was it worth it?" Abby asked.

Her mother got in, big and dank and puffing. She started the car without looking at her daughter. "What a bridge!" she said finally.

THE next day they made their way along the Antrim coast, through towns bannered with Union Jacks and lines from Scottish hymns, down to Derry with its barbed wire and I.R.A. scrawlings on the city walls—"John Major is a Zionist Jew." ("Hello," said a British officer, when they stopped to stare.) Then they escaped across bandit country, and once more down across the border into the south, down the Donegal coast, its fishing villages like some old, never-was Cape Cod. Staring out through the windshield, off into the horizon, Abby began to think that all the beauty and ugliness and turbulence you found scattered through nature you could also find in people themselves, all collected in them, all together in one place. No matter what terror or loveliness the earth could produce—winds, seas—a person could produce the same, lived with the same, lived with all that mixed-up nature swirling inside, every bit. There was nothing as complex in the world—no flower or stone—as a single "hello" from a human being.

ONCE in a while Abby and her mother broke their silences with talk of Mrs. Mallon's job as office manager at a small flashlight company—"I had to totally rearrange our insurance policies. The dental and major-medical were eating our lunch!"—or with questions about the route signs, or the black dots signifying auto deaths. But mostly her mother wanted to talk about Abby's shaky marriage and what she was going to do. "Look, another ruined abbey," she took to saying, every time they passed a heap of medieval stones.

"When are you going back to Bob?"

"I went back," said Abby. "But then I left again. Whoops."

Her mother sighed. "Women of your generation are always hoping for some other kind of romance than the one they have," said Mrs. Mallon. "Aren't they?"

"Who knows?" said Abby. She was starting to feel a little tight-lipped with her mother, crammed into this space together like astronauts. She was starting to have a highly inflamed sense of event: a single word rang and vibrated. The slightest movement could annoy, a breath, an odor. Unlike her sister Theda, who had always remained sunny and cheerfully intimate with everyone, Abby had always been darker and left to her own devices; she and her mother had never been very close. When Abby was a child, her mother had always repelled her a bit—the oily smell of her hair, her belly button like a worm curled in a pit, the sanitary napkins in the bathroom wastebasket, horrid as a war, then later strewn along the curb by raccoons who would tear them from the trash cans at night. Once, at a restaurant, when she was little, Abby had burst into an unlatched ladies' room stall, only to find her mother sitting there, in a dazed and unseemly way, peering out at her from the toilet seat, like a cuckoo in a clock.

There were things one should never know about another person.

Later, Abby decided that perhaps it hadn't been her mother at all.

Yet now, here she and her mother were, sharing the tiniest of cars, reunited in a wheeled and metal womb, sharing small double cots in bed-and-breakfasts, waking up with mouths stale and close upon each other or backs turned and rocking in angry-seeming humps. *The land of ire!* Talk of Abby's marriage and its possible demise trotted before them on the road like a herd of sheep, insomnia's sheep, and it made Abby want to have a gun.

"I never bothered with conventional romantic fluff," said Mrs. Mallon. "I wasn't the type. I always worked, and I was practical, put myself forward, and got things done and over with. If I liked a man, I asked him out myself. That's how I met your father. I asked him out. I even proposed the marriage."

"I know."

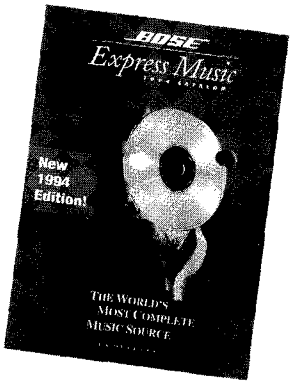
"And then I stayed with him until the day he died. Actually, three days after. He was a good man." She paused. "Which is more than I can say about some people."

Abby didn't say anything.

"Bob's a good man," added Mrs. Mallon.

"I didn't say he wasn't."

There was silence again between them now as the countryside once more unfolded its quilt of greens, the old roads triggering memories as if this were a land she had travelled long ago, its mix of luck and unluck like her own past; it seemed stuck in time like a daydream or a book. Up close the mountains were craggy, scabby with rock and green, like a buck's antlers losing their fuzz. But distance filled the gaps with moss. Wasn't that the truth? Abby sat quietly glugging Ballygowan water from a plastic bottle and popping Extra Strong Mints. Perhaps she should turn on the radio, listen to one of the call-in quizzes or to the news. But then her mother would take over, fiddle and re-tune. Her mother was always searching for country music,



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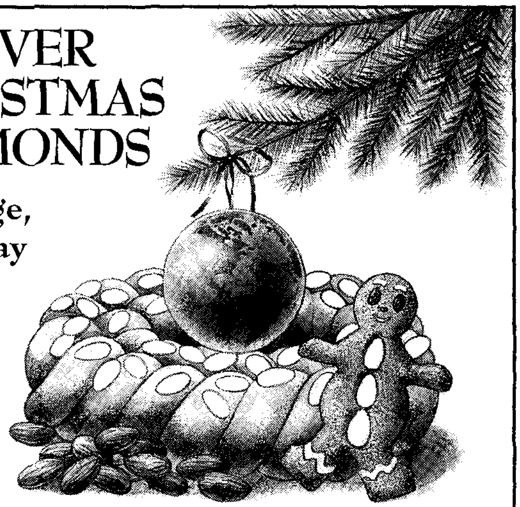

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songs with the words "devil woman." She loved those.

"Promise me one thing," said Mrs. Mallon.

"What?" said Abby.

"That you'll try with Bob."

At what price? Abby wanted to yell, but she and her mother were too old for that now.

Mrs. Mallon continued, thoughtfully, with the sort of pseudo-wisdom she donned now that she was sixty. "Once you're with a man you have to sit still with him. As scary as it seems. You have to be brave and learn to reap the benefits of inertia," and here she gunned the motor to pass a tractor on a curve. "Loose chippings," said the sign. "Hidden dip." But Abby's mother drove as if these were cocktail-party chatter. A sign ahead showed six black dots.

"Yeah," said Abby, clutching the dashboard. "Dad was inert. Dad was inert except that once every three years he jumped up and socked somebody in the mouth."

"That's not true."

"It's basically true."

In Killybegs, they followed the signs for Donegal City. "You women today," Mrs. Mallon said. "You expect too much."

"If it's Tuesday, this must be Sligo," said Abby. She had taken to making up stupid jokes. "What do you call a bus with a soccer team on it?"

"What?" They passed a family of gypsies, camped next to a mountain of car batteries they hoped to sell.

"A football coach." Sometimes Abby laughed raucously and sometimes not at all. Sometimes she just shrugged. She was waiting for the Blarney Stone. That was all she'd come here for, so everything else she could endure.

They stopped at a bookshop to get a better map and inquire, perhaps, about a bathroom. Inside there were four customers: two priests reading golf books, and a mother with her tiny son who traipsed after her along the shelves begging: "Please, Mummy, just a wee book, Mummy. Please just a wee book." There was no better map. There was no bathroom. "Sorry," the clerk said, and one of the priests glanced up quickly. Abby and her mother went next door to look at the Kinsale smocks and wool sweaters—tiny cardigans that young Irish children, on sweltering summer days of seventy-one degrees, wore on the beach, over their bathing suits. "So cute," said Abby, and the two of them wandered through the store, touching things. In the back, by the wool caps, Abby's mother found a marionette hanging from a ceiling hook and began to play with it a little, waving its arms to the store music, which was a Beethoven concerto. Abby went to pay for a smock, ask about a bathroom or a good pub, and when she came back her mother was still there, transfixed, conducting the concerto with the puppet. Her face was arranged in girlish joy, luminous, as Abby rarely saw it. When the concerto was over, Abby handed her a bag. "Here." she said, "I bought you a smock."

Mrs. Mallon let go of the marionette, and her face darkened. "I never had a real childhood," she said, taking the bag and looking off into the middle distance. "Being the oldest, I was always my mother's confidante. I always had to act grown-up and responsible. Which

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wasn't my natural nature." Abby steered her toward the door. "And then when I really was grown-up, there was Theda, who needed all my time, and your father, of course, with his demands. But then there was you. You I liked. You I could leave alone."

"I bought you a smock," Abby said again.

They used the bathroom at O'Hara's pub, bought a single mineral water and split it, then went on to the Drumcliff cemetery to see the dead Yeatses. Then they sped on toward Sligo City to find a room, and the next day were up and out to Knock, to watch lame women, sick women, women who wanted to get pregnant ("Knocked up," said Abby) rub their rosaries on the original stones of the shrine. They drove down to Clifden, around Connemara, to Galway and Limerick—"There once were two gals from America, one named Abby and her mother, named Erica. . . ." They sang, minstrel speed demons around the Ring of Kerry, its palm trees and blue and pink hydrangea like a set from an operetta. "Playgirls of the Western World!" exclaimed her mother. They came to rest, at dark, near Ballylicky, in a bed-and-breakfast, a former hunting lodge, in a glen just off the ring. They had a late supper of toddies and a soda bread their hostess called Curranty Dick.

"Don't I know it," said Mrs. Mallon. Which depressed Abby—it was like a tacky fixture in a room—and so she excused herself and went upstairs, to bed.

It was the next day, through Ballylicky, Bantry, Skibbereen, and Cork, that they entered Blarney. At the castle the line to kiss the stone was long, hot, and frightening. It jammed the tiny winding stairs of the castle's suffocating left tower, and people pressed themselves against the dark wall to make room for others who had lost their nerve and were coming back down.

"This is ridiculous," said Abby. But by the time they'd reached the top, her annoyance had turned to anxiety. To kiss the stone, she saw, people had to lie on their backs out over a parapet, stretching their necks out to place their lips on the underside of a supporting wall where the stone was laid. A strange-looking, leprechaunish man was squatting at the side of the stone, supposedly to help people arch back, but he seemed to be holding them too loosely, a careless and sadistic glint in his eyes, and some people were changing their minds and going back downstairs, fearful and inarticulate as ever.

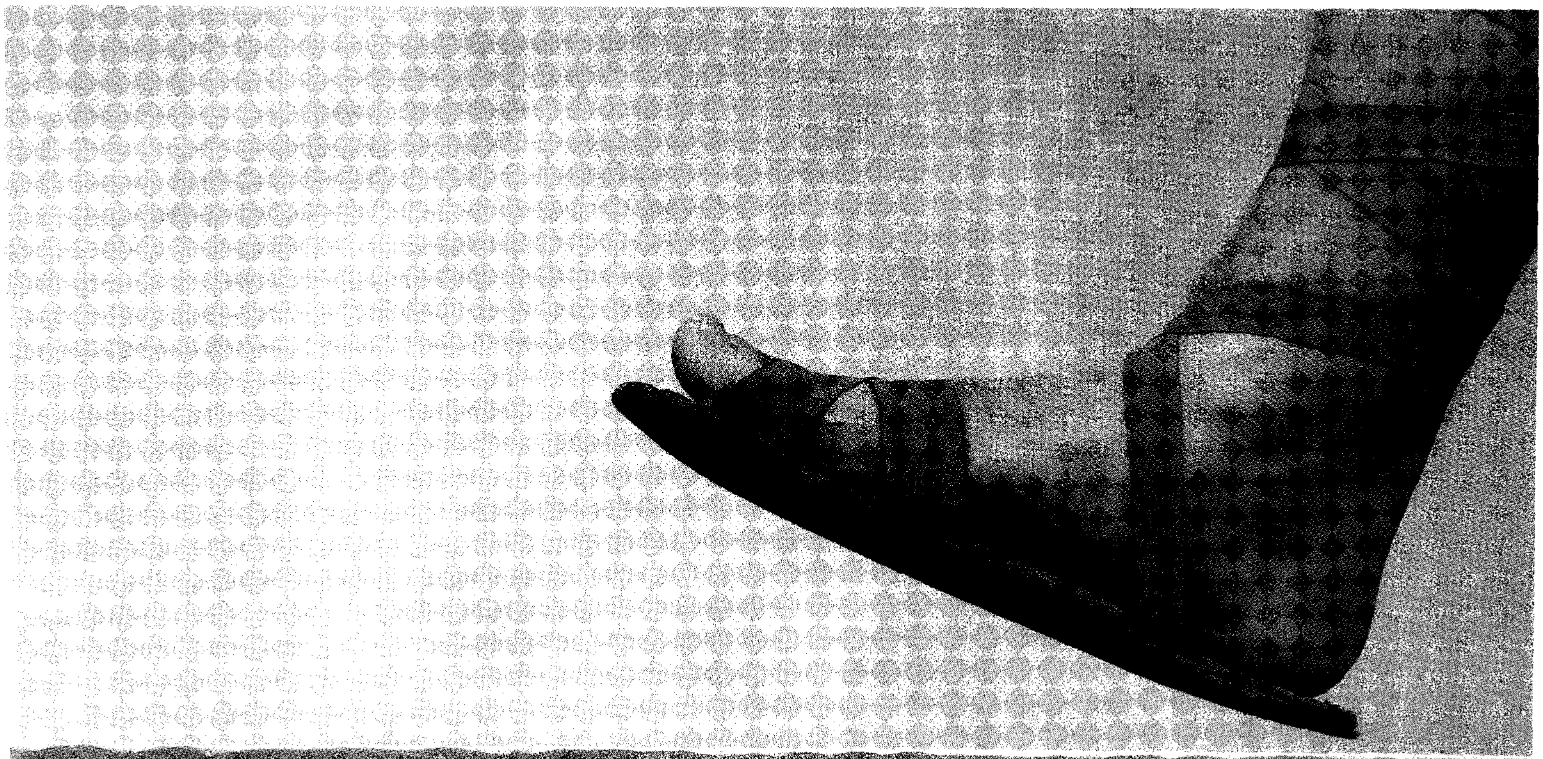
"I don't think I can do this," said Abby hesitantly, tying her dark raincoat more tightly around her.

"Of course you can," said her mother. "You've come all this way. This is why you came." Now that they were at the top of the castle, the line seemed to be moving quickly. Abby looked back, and around, and the view was green and rich, and breathtaking, like a photo soaked in dyes.

"Next!" she heard the leprechaun shouting.

Ahead of them a German woman was struggling to get back up from where the leprechaun had left her. She wiped her mouth and made a face. "That vuz awfhul," she grumbled.

Panic seized Abby. "You know what? I don't want to do this," she said to her mother. There were only two people ahead



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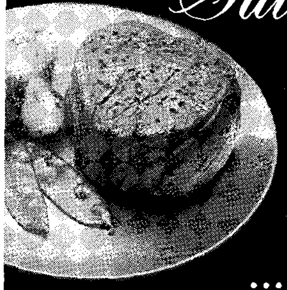

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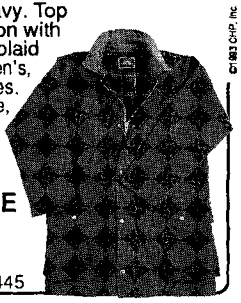

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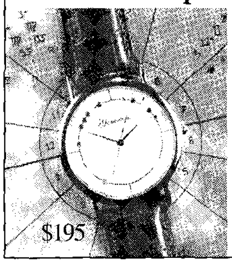

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of them in line. One of them was now getting down on his back, clutching the iron supports and inching his hands down, arching at the neck and waist to reach the stone, exposing his white throat. His wife stood above him, taking his picture.

"But you came all this way! Don't be a ninny!" Her mother was bullying her again. It never gave her courage; in fact, it deprived her of courage. But it gave her bitterness and impulsiveness, which could look like the same thing.

"Next," said the leprechaun nastily. He hated these people, one could see that. One could see he half hoped they would go crashing down off the ledge in a heap of raincoats, limbs, and traveller's checks.

"Go on," said Mrs. Mallon.

"I can't," Abby whined. Her mother was nudging and the leprechaun was frowning. "I can't. You go."

"No. Come on. Think of it as a test." Her mother, too, gave her a frown, then a lunatic scowl. "You work with tests. And in school you always did well on them."

"For tests you have to study."

"You studied!"

"I didn't study the right thing."

"Oh, Abby."

"I can't," Abby whispered. "I just don't think I can." She breathed deeply and moved quickly. "Oh—O.K." She threw her hat down and fell to the stone floor fast, to get it over with.

"Move back, move back," droned the leprechaun, like a train conductor.

She could now feel no more space behind her back; from her waist up she was out over air and hanging on only by her hands clenched around the iron rails. She bent her head as far back as she could, but it wasn't far enough.

"Lower," said the leprechaun.

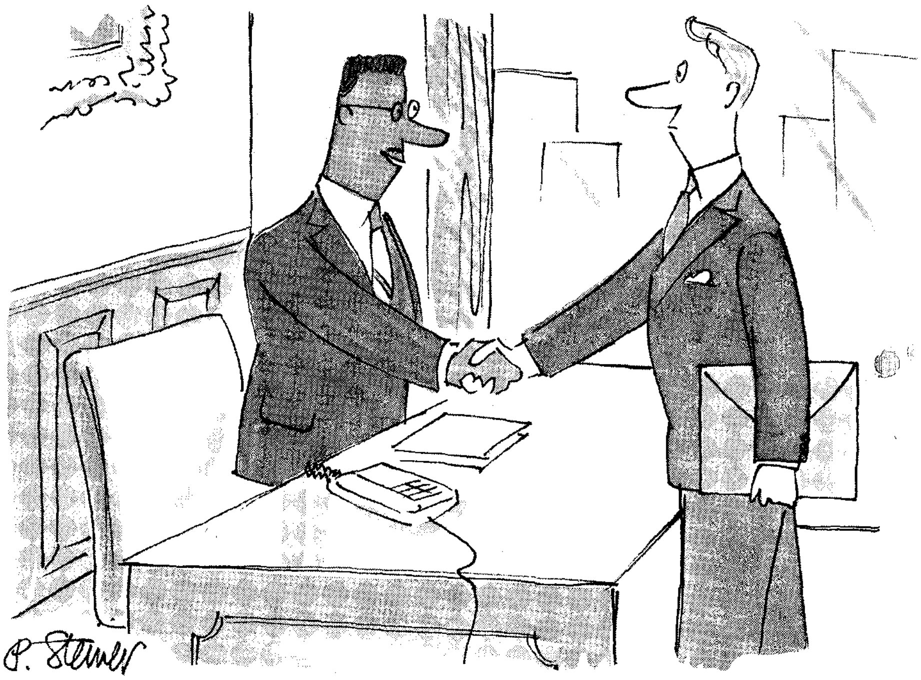
She slid her hands down farther, as if she were doing a trick on a jungle gym. Still, she couldn't see the Stone itself, only the castle wall.

"Lower," said the leprechaun.

She slid her hands even lower, but her head back, her chin skyward, could feel her windpipe pressing out against the skin, and this time she could see the Stone. It was about the size of a microwave oven and was covered with moisture and dirt and lipstick marks in the shape of lips—lavender, apricot, red. It seemed very unhygienic for a public attraction, filthy and wet, and so now, instead of giving it a big smack, she blew a peck at it, then shouted, "O.K., help me up, please," and the leprechaun helped her back up.

Abby stood and brushed herself off. Her raincoat was covered with whitish mud. "Eeyuhh," she said. But she had done it! At least sort of. She put her hat back on. She tipped the leprechaun a pound. She didn't know how she felt. She felt nothing. Finally, these dares one made with oneself didn't change a thing. They were all a construction of wish and string and distance.

"Now my turn," said her mother with a kind of reluctant determination, hand-



"My people will be in touch with your people."

ing Abby her sunglasses. As her mother got down stiffly, inching her way toward the stone, Abby suddenly saw something she'd never seen before: her mother was terrified. For all her bullying and bravado, she was proceeding, and proceeding badly, through a great storm of terror in her brain. As her mother tried to inch herself back toward the Stone, Abby, now privy to her bare face, saw that this fierce bonfire of a woman had gone twitchy and melancholic—it was a ruse, all her formidable display. She was only trying to prove something, trying pointlessly to defy and overcome her fears—instead of just learning to live with them, since, hell, you were living with them anyway.

"Mom, you O.K.?" Mrs. Mallon's face was in a grimace, her mouth open and bared. The former auburn of her hair had descended, Abby saw, to her teeth, which she'd let rust with years of coffee and tea.

Now the leprechaun was having to hold her more tightly than he had the other people. "Lower, now lower."

"Oh, God, not any lower," cried Mrs. Mallon.

"You're almost there."

"I don't see it."

"There, you got it?" He loosened his grip and let her slip further.

"Yes," she said. She let out a puckering, spitting sound. But then, when she struggled to come back up, she seemed to be stuck. Her legs thrashed out before her, her shoes loosened from her feet; her skirt rode up revealing the brown tops of her pantyhose. She was bent too strangely—from the hips, it seemed—and she was plump and didn't have the stomach muscles to lift herself back up. The leprechaun seemed to be having difficulty.

"Can someone here help me?"

"Oh, my God," said Abby, and she and a man in line immediately squatted next to Mrs. Mallon to help her. She was heavy, stiff with fright, and when they had finally lifted her and got her sitting, then standing again, she looked stricken and pale.

A guard near the staircase volunteered to escort her down.

"Would you like that, Mom?" Abby asked. Mrs. Mallon simply nodded.

"You get in front of us," the guard said to Abby in the singsong accent of County Cork, "just in case she falls." And Abby got in front, her coat taking the updraft and spreading to either side as she circled slowly down into the dungeon dark of the stairwell, into the black, like a bat new to its wings.

IN a square in the center of town an evangelist was waving a Bible and shouting about "the brevity of life," how it was a thing grabbed by one hand and then gone, escaped through the fingers. "God's word is quick! " he called out.

"Let's go over there," said Abby, and she took her mother to a pub called Brady's Public House for a restorative Guinness. "Are you O.K.?" Abby kept asking. They still had no place to stay that night, and though it remained light quite late and the inns stayed open until ten, she imagined the two of them temporarily homeless, sleeping under the stars, snacking on slugs. Stars the size of Chicago! Dew like a pixie bath beneath them! They would lick it from their arms.

"I'm fine," Mrs. Mallon said, waving her daughter's questions away. "What a stone!"

"Mom," said Abby, frowning; she was now wondering about a few things. "When you went across that rope bridge, did you do that O.K.?"

Mrs. Mallon sighed. "Well, I got the idea of it," she said huffily. "But there were some gusts of wind that caused it to buck a little, and though some people thought that was fun, I had to get down and crawl back. You'll recall there was a little rain."

"You crawled back on your hands and knees."

"Well, yes," she admitted. "There was a nice Belgian man who helped me." She felt unmasked before her daughter and now gulped at her Guinness.

Abby tried to take a cheerful tone, switching the subject a little, and that reminded her of Theda, Theda somehow living in Abby's voice, her larynx suddenly a summer camp for the cheerful and slow. "Well, look at you!" said Abby. "Do you feel eloquent and confident, now that you've kissed the stone?"

"Not really." Mrs. Mallon shrugged.

Now that they had kissed it, or sort of, would they become self-conscious? What would they end up talking about? Movies, probably. Just as they always had at home. Movies with scenery, movies with songs.

"How about you?" asked Mrs. Mallon.

"Well," said Abby, "mostly I feel like we've probably caught strep throat. And yet, and yet—" here she sat up and leaned forward. No tests, or radio quizzes, or ungodly speeches, or brain-dead songs, or

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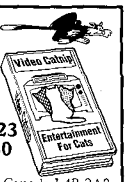

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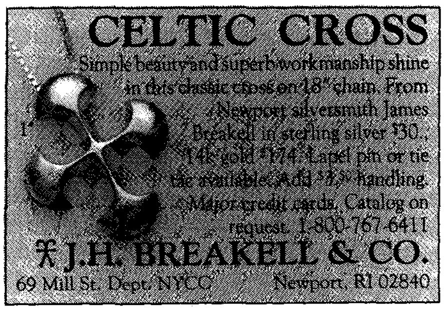
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kookie prayers, or shouts, or prolix conversations that with drink and too much time always revealed how stupid and mean even the best people were, just simply this: "A toast. I feel a toast coming on."

"You do?"

"Yes, I do." No one had toasted Abby and Bob at their little wedding, and that's what had been wrong, she believed now. No toast. There had been only thirty guests, and they had simply eaten the ham canapés and gone home. How could such a marriage go right? It wasn't that such ceremonies were important in and of themselves. They were nothing. They were zeros. But they were zeros as placeholders; they held numbers and equations intact. And once you underwent them you could move on, know the empty power of their blessing, and not spend time missing them.

From here on in, she would believe in toasts. One was collecting itself now, in her head. She gazed over at her mother and took a deep breath. Perhaps her mother had never shown Abby affection, not really, but she had given her a knack for solitude, with its terrible lurches outward and its smooth glide back to peace. Abby would toast her for that. It was really the world that was your brutal mother, the one that nursed and neglected you, and your own mother was only your sibling in that world. Abby lifted her glass. "May the worst always be behind you, may the sun daily warm your arms. . . ." She looked down at her cocktail napkin for assistance, but there was only a cartoon of a big-chested colleen, two shamrocks over her breasts. Abby looked back up. *God's word is quick!* "May your car always start. . . ." But perhaps God might also begin with tall, slow words: the belly bloat of a fib, the distended tale. "And may you always have a clean shirt," she continued, her voice growing gallant, public, and loud, "and a holding roof, healthy children, and good cabbages—and may you be with me in my heart, Mother, as you are now, in this place, always and forever, like a flaming light."

There was noise in the pub.

Blank is to childhood as journey is to lips.

"Right," said Mrs. Mallon, looking into her stout in a concentrated, bright-eyed way. She had never been courted before, not once in her entire life, and now she blushed, ears on fire, lifted her pint, and drank. ♦

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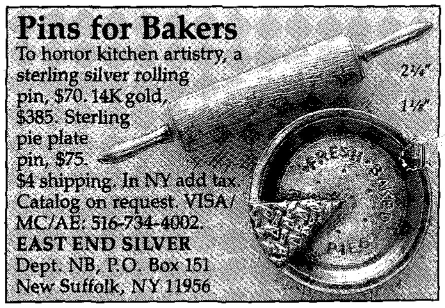

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THE CRITICS

THE ART WORLD

THE WISE INNOCENT

BY ADAM GOPNIK

THE Roy Lichtenstein retrospective that opened this month at the Guggenheim Museum has turned out to be more pleasurable than almost anybody expected. Even those of us who admire the artist and think highly of his work felt that there was no real point in putting on a Lichtenstein retrospective, since the art life in New York has for several years now seemed to be one long Lichtenstein retrospective, interrupted only briefly by shows of Matisse or Magritte or Miró. Lichtenstein has been everywhere. He was one of the heavily represented heroes of "High & Low," at MOMA three years ago, for example, and of "Hand-Painted Pop," at the Whitney this summer. A huge Lichtenstein greeted you as you came into MOMA's recently rehung third floor; a cab passing down Seventh Avenue has to go by one of his sixty-eight-foot-high cartoon murals. Lichtenstein seemed to be an artist about whom there was nothing left to say, and of whom, perhaps, there was relatively little left to *see*.

Yet as you cruise the Guggenheim spiral you have a sense—shared even by most of the skeptics—of almost unalloyed, glad-hearted delight. This is, first of all, the best-looking show the Guggenheim has ever had. The Guggenheim is a famous painting-killer, but what it kills in particular is pictures with complicated or subtle or just painterly surfaces. From a formal point of view, Lichtenstein's pictures, with their flat, uninflected areas of yellow and red and their black serpentine, Disneyish lines, are really posters, and they have the poster's gift of making themselves at home anywhere you put them down. Instead of seeming trapped in their little bays, like most pictures at the Guggenheim, these paintings are set free by their exuberance, and seem almost to call out gleefully to each other across the rotunda. But it isn't just that Lichtenstein's pictures look good in the Guggenheim. They make the Guggenheim look good. In the presence of the powerful deadpan aura of a hundred and twenty-odd Lichtensteins, what is latently period and corny in Frank Lloyd Wright's late style—the organic spirals, the surprisingly cute, circus-tent details—suddenly has the good-humored high spirits of an unembarrassed cliché. As you walk through the spiral on an afternoon, with Lichtenstein's images and titles all around—"Frightened Girl," "Blonde Waiting"—everything (and everyone) you see suddenly becomes a Lichtenstein: Blonde in High Heels, Tourist Waiting, Couple Necking, and, of course, Art Critic with Notebook.

The show is divided into the four decades of Lichtenstein's activity, starting with the first, handmade copies of single comic-strip panels in the early sixties and the airy, larksome landscapes and seascapes beginning in the middle of that decade. It goes on to the paraphrases of early modern art of the latter part of the sixties, and continues with the more abstract "Entablatures" and "Mirrors" series of the seventies and the mock-Expressionist pictures from the eighties. The show ends up with the Brobdingnagian schematic interiors that he has been painting in the last few years.

Lichtenstein has grown less than any other contemporary artist of stature. His style is remarkably consistent. Thirty years ago, he became famous by paraphrasing the style of cheap comic books, and he is still doing it. The joke is strong-lunged rather than merely long-winded, though, because it turns out to be double-edged. His paintings are always inventive, as jokes are always inventive, despite their formal narrowness. He uses a cliché style to look at complicated material, until the clichés turn out to be more complicated than you had imagined, and the complicated material turns out to have more of the elements of cliché than you had realized.

That those very early pictures in his signature style had anything to do with high style wasn't, at first, easy to see. They just looked like comics. The received history of the period is that Pop emerged as a cool, impersonal alternative to the overwrought histrionics of Abstract Expressionism. But the truth is that by 1961 Abstract Expressionism had lost its force, except as a general, intimidating cultural exemplar. The de Kooning brushstroke that Lichtenstein cartooned as a cliché was already a cliché. That was the joke. The Pop painters weren't quarrelling with Pollock. They were quarrelling with Morris Louis and Helen Frankenthaler and the whole second generation of American abstraction—with the airy high-mindedness and implicit unreality of the big, "lyrical" pure-painting style. The look of Pop (as Robert Rosenblum pointed out at the time) was the same as the look of the hard-edged, radically empirical abstraction that was also coming into vogue: Frank Stella and Kenneth Noland liked simple black lines and big areas of primary color as much as Lichtenstein did, and for the same reason. Even an early Lichtenstein, like "Look Mickey" (a panel of Donald and Mickey fishing, taken right out of a Disney comic book), was part of a general reaction to the fading transcendentalism of abstract painting; it was the joke version of a serious rebellion.

Still, the early pictures are not all, or even mostly, art-world in-jokes. There was a realist impulse in early Lichtenstein, an urge to say—gently and humorously, but with a certain puritanical flair for the simple truth—that what was missing from American painting was American life. Those stilted romances and war comics and radiant hot dogs were the reality we inhabited—an invented landscape of cultural stereotypes that may have been cheap but was indubitably ours. At first, a picture like the "Drowning Girl," of 1963—the famous, iconic blue-haired girl who cries, "I don't care! I'd rather sink—than call Brad for help!"—seems to be straight, Duchampian displacement, just a comics panel made big. Yet the comics of the period, to which Lichtenstein looked for instruction, really had no "pop" qualities at all. They weren't bright and primary and full of serpentine lines and undulating space. They looked *grimy*. The girls had none of the Brooke Shields, square-chinned chic that we associate with Lichtenstein's women; they looked more like Donna Reed. For several years, Lichtenstein had to alter and recompose what he found in the comics to bring them closer to his Platonic ideal of the way comics *ought* to look. A seemingly straightforward appropriation like the 1963 "Okay, Hot-Shot!" actually involved splicing together and recomposing three separate comic sources. What made the early pictures matter wasn't that they looked more like art than the comics did. It was that they looked more like the comics than the comics did.

Lichtenstein took the trouble because he wanted the comics to stand for something—for a certain kind of dumb-bunny straightforwardness and a forthright taste for design. He wanted them to be a series of clichés that, if they were ridiculous, had the integrity of their own ridiculousness. It was a deeply patronizing and condescending reading of what the comics can and can't do, but it was patronizing according to the rules of a rich tradition. Not, however, the Duchampian tradition of the smugly displaced object, the dandyish magic trick. Lichtenstein's work belonged instead to the modern tradition begun by the cult of Le Douanier Rousseau—a cult in which condescension, put-on, envy, and genuine admiration were all mixed up. Lichtenstein became his own Douanier: he fabricated a new kind of innocence, and then envied and patronized himself.

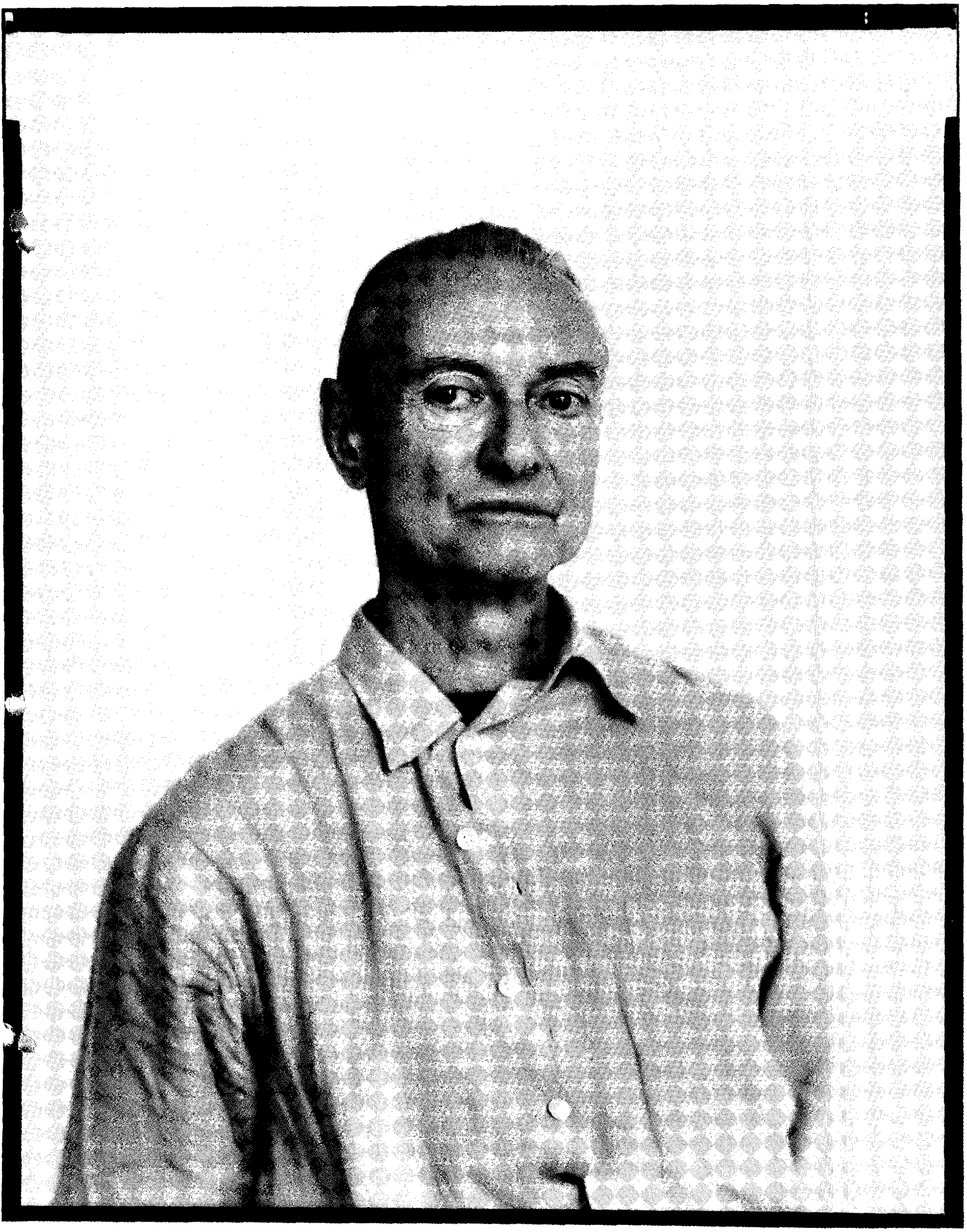
It is this doubleness of feeling, at once affectionate and mocking—and not just the doubleness of art-world reference—which gives the pictures an emotional rather than a merely historical charge. To anyone looking closely at them, the most surprising thing is how variable in quality and feeling they are. Abstract Expressionism, which staked so much on the notion of the unique, irreproducible gesture and moment, ended up producing fairly stable, homogenized work: a good Motherwell is better than a poor one, yet even an ordinary Motherwell tells you most of what you need to know about Motherwell. But Pop, for all the lip service it paid to an ideal of impersonal, repetitive production, is such a weird mixture of borrowed graphic punch, mild in-jokes, parody, and found poetry that the gap between the first-rate pictures and the second-rate ones is enormous.

Of these early pictures of Lichtenstein's, the girls are by far the best. More than one whole bay at the Guggenheim is given over to girls' heads: the "Frightened Girl" and "Blonde Waiting," and all those enormous, doe-eyed nurses and girl Fridays with their tears shaped like golf-course water hazards. Lichtenstein's eye for the cliché is punctilious. The "Drowning Girl" originally said, in her balloon, "I don't care if I have a cramp!—I'd rather sink—than call Mal for help!" Lichtenstein eliminated the cramp; his girls don't cramp, because they rarely have bodies—they are all eyes and tears. There is in the girls' heads a parodic impulse so heartfelt that it becomes, through sheer excess, a kind of idealism.

After Cindy Sherman, these stereotypes of feminine suffering can look like a "commentary" on the imposition of cultural stereotypes on real women. Diane Waldman, desperately trying to save Lichtenstein for the present moment, insists in her catalogue essay that that is what they are. But this is a truly sentimental misreading of the pictures. You can believe that Lichtenstein's girls offer a scathing critique of the patriarchy only if you are prepared to believe that "Get Smart" is a savage assault on the national-security state. The girls belong to a different culture—one of spoof and put-on. It is the humor of Lichtenstein's girls that they were made, like it or not, from a position of unassailable superiority; no woman who was smart enough to get the joke was thought to be vulnerable to the stereotypes—not these stereotypes, anyway.

By the late sixties, Lichtenstein had begun to apply his comic-book style—the dot screens, the undulating lines, the big closeups, the black outlines—to paraphrases of a whole variety of early-modern-art styles. He used his cartoon style to caricature Mondrian's abstractions, Deco mural design, de Kooning's Action painting, and, a few years later, Cubism and Surrealism. He turned out to have an incomparable eye for the precise moment in which an expressive impulse becomes a stylistic tic. He saw that the imagery of modernism had become a set of properties. The Swiss-cheese holes and desert landscapes and disembodied eyes of Surrealism, the calculatedly slapdash overlapping planes and found objects of Cubist collage, and even the element of wallpaper design in Mondrian—no matter how deep your love for these things, after Lichtenstein you can't look at them without seeing an element of strain and self-parody. Everything becomes a stuffed owl sooner or later. Lichtenstein identified the moment when it happened to modernism.

And yet, along with the jokes, there is in his best paintings, and particularly in the seascapes and nocturnes, a genuine vein of frozen poetry, as lovely and stylized as a Japanese screen. It is this vein that Lichtenstein seems to have



Roy Lichtenstein, photographed by Richard Avedon in New York City, October 8, 1993.

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been exploiting most recently, and to best effect. In the late seventies, the spoofs of modernism were losing a little of their edge. They had the look of a prefabricated joke, a party charade, that the obliging artist was producing on order, rather than out of a genuine comic impulse. (The parodies of de Kooning's hyped-up brushstrokes that Lichtenstein attempted in the mid-eighties are boring, because they are not clearly enough distinguished from the originals. They lack a transforming idea.) But in the early nineties he found a new subject, and began to make giant paintings of upper-middle-class interiors. He dumbed down his style to paint them, abandoning the complicated, cursive, Aubrey Beardsley-meets-Spider-Man style that he had evolved over the years and returning to a squared-off, bluntly outlined manner that recalls the very early Warhol. What he has discovered in these pictures is that the artlessness of cliché upper-middle-class décor has the same naïve aspirations to high style that the old comics had. He looks at the clichés of *Architectural Digest* with the same shrewd tenderness with which he once looked at the clichés of *True Romance*.

It may seem strange that so thoroughly parodic and doggedly "ironic" an art should still sit at the very center of our art establishment. And it's possible to see Lichtenstein as a real culture-killer, however gifted and original. The Guggenheim, as part of its publicity push for the show, recently filled Bergdorf Goodman's display windows and devoted them to a Lichtenstein tribute. A circle comes closed here. Pop art first peeked out from the art-world underground in the windows of Bonwit Teller thirty years ago, when Warhol took over those windows to show his first Pop paintings. That was a bubbling up from below; the Lichtenstein repros in Bergdorf's windows represented an institutional crush from above. The clothes looked helpless under the weight of the museum.

Many a grim and sad moral could be drawn from this. You could conclude, for example, that Lichtenstein was, for good or ill, the inventor of the house style of postmodernism, the self-protecting ironic manner that connects Kenny Scharf to David Letterman. But looking at the show, rather than the windows, you see that Lichtenstein is in fact the last modern artist, and not the first post-anything. His work depends on distances. It does not occupy the dead mid-ground of consumer culture; instead, it compares things that are wildly recherché (modern-art styles) with things that were once easily overlooked (cheap-comic-book style). It is the space between the clichés he dissected and the tradition he aspired to that gives his art its juice and wit and reach.

In the end, Lichtenstein isn't an ironist at all but a peculiar kind of American *faux-naïf.* The ironist believes in his own knowingness; the *faux-naïf* still believes in somebody else's innocence. He cannot reach it any longer, perhaps—that's why the *naïf* is *faux*—but he recognizes it as a lost alternative to an excess of sophistication. And it is that sense of innocence lost but longed for which sits very quietly, almost imperceptibly, as the little daemon in Lichtenstein's art. A nostalgia fills his paintings, and gives them, for all their surface cool, a heartbeat of feeling. The nostalgia is for the verities of the comics, of course, but also for the verities of early modernism. Compared with Richard Serra's rusty curtains or Frank Stella's neon birds, Lichtenstein's recent paintings, despite their realist impulse, are not even terribly "American." Their presence is really more like that of French early modern painting—the decorative Léger and the lighter-than-air Delaunay.

Lichtenstein's persistence in his own invented clichés has in the end earned him a place among the wise innocents of the twentieth century. The happiness that radiates from his art, and fills the Guggenheim these days, is based on its faith in reconciliation—the reconciliation of cartoons and art, of cliché style and real feeling. For the most part, that faith is gone now. Postmodernism—with Barbara Kruger at one extreme and Lucian Freud at the other—seems to guarantee that the century will not conclude on a comic note of resolution and rhyming opposites. Lichtenstein recalls an older idea of the modern artist—the explorer who has descended into the lower regions and come up beaming. He looks today like the last modern artist in the old role, as the mysteriously happy man. ♦

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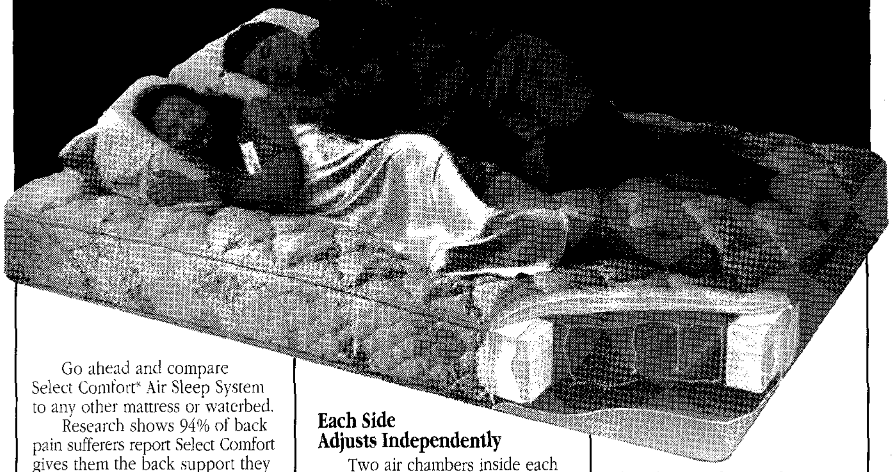

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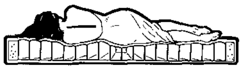

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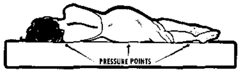

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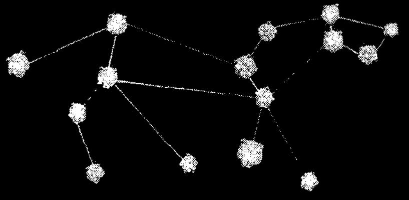

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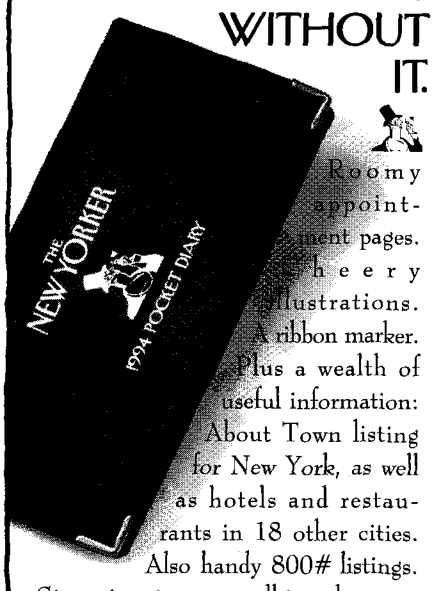

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE BATTLE OF LITTLE ROCK

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

THE somewhat deranged charm of James Carville, the chief strategist of Bill Clinton's Presidential campaign, dominates D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus's exhilarating documentary "The War Room." A lot of the movie's action takes place in the candidate's campaign headquarters, in Little Rock, a suite of untidy offices where Carville and George Stephanopoulos—Clinton's communications director—do their peculiar work, which looks less like purposeful, organized activity than like a bizarrely intense form of hanging around. Carville and Stephanopoulos and their harried staff seem to spend their days (and nights) looking up at the half-dozen or so TV monitors mounted on the wall, cajoling media people by phone, arguing among themselves about the phrasing of ad copy, eating popcorn out of coffee filters, and rubbing their eyes to bring them back into focus. Stephanopoulos generally manages to remain calm and rational in the midst of all this frenzy. Most of the other staffers look a little out of their element: solid citizens who don't quite belong in these rattily furnished offices but are willing to endure the hardships for the sake of good government—and, possibly, a job in a Democratic Administration. What sets Carville apart—what makes him unambiguously the star of the picture—is that, of the dozens of people we see scurrying through the War Room, he's the only one who looks completely at home there. For everyone else, this disorder is temporary, something they'll chuckle about fondly in their later years, like crazy stuff they did in college; for Carville, the chaos of electoral politics is his life.

Without this odd, compelling character at the center of the story, Pennebaker and Hegedus probably wouldn't have had much of a movie. When Pennebaker worked on the short documentary "Primary," which followed John Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey with a handheld camera as they campaigned in the 1960 Wisconsin primary, there was some novelty for viewers in the film's fly-on-the-wall perspective. If you watch that picture now, everything in it looks tame and uninteresting, because since then we've been behind these (or similar) scenes plenty of times; thanks to C-SPAN and the rapid expansion of the inside-Washington punditry business, the public seems to have a permanent backstage pass to the spectacle of national politics. And the guerrilla-filmmaking techniques of what was once called cinéma vérité no longer signify realism, objectivity, tell-it-like-it-is candor; the rough, unfinished look of pictures like "Primary" is now part of the visual lexicon of sneaker ads, music videos, and urban-gritty TV cop shows. Pennebaker may even bear some responsibility for this transformation: his 1965 Bob Dylan documentary, "Don't Look Back," apotheosized, in grainy black-and-white, the rock ethos of outlaw cool, and the "Subterranean Homesick Blues" segment of the film has played as a video on MTV.

The fact is that political insiders like Carville and Stephanopoulos aren't exactly anonymous backroom figures, the shadowy kingmakers of old-style politics. These guys are celebrities in their own right. If you followed the 1992 campaign at all closely, "The War Room" won't tell you much you don't already know about the Democrats' strategy, and it doesn't identify any unsung heroes. The Clinton campaign's internal mantra—"It's the economy, stupid"—is a likelier contender for Bartlett's than any of the candidate's official public utterances, and everybody

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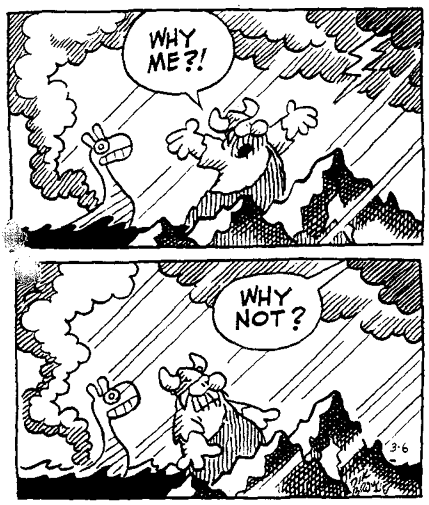
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knows that the author of the phrase is James Carville. As a chronicle of the election, "The War Room" is a skillful, intelligent recap, and a nice souvenir, like a Super Bowl-highlights film for the long-suffering fans of the winning team: it's fun to relive the highs and lows of the election season with the knowledge that the right side will take home the trophy in the end.

If "The War Room" were no more than that, it would just be ephemeral, partisan stuff. But documentary filmmakers will sometimes find in their miles of footage a movie that's better than the one they set out to shoot, and that's what seems to have happened to Pennebaker and Hegedus. They found Carville, and turned their campaign documentary into a memorable example of another favorite genre of nonfiction film: essentially, this is a portrait of an obsessed practitioner of an arcane, intricate art. "The War Room" is like one of those educational films about glassblowers, or icon painters, or ninety-year-old Appalachian fiddlers, but without the aura of reverence. By the end of the picture, you realize that the clutter and the noise that Carville surrounds himself with are the by-products of an active, functioning workshop: in the middle of the mess is a man who is with uncanny precision analyzing and reshaping the huge, amorphous mass of American public opinion.

As Pennebaker and Hegedus present him, Carville seems the quintessential political junkie. He's gaunt, sallow, wild-eyed, and sloppily dressed, and his conversational style is non-stop, wired monologuizing; he obviously has too much of *something* in his system. The strategic motto of the campaign is "Speed kills"—that is to say, you neutralize your opponents' attacks by responding to them swiftly—and "The War Room" makes it easy to see the connection between the principle and the man who articulates it. Carville has a gunslinger's alertness: even in repose, he looks a little dangerous, like Jack Palance lolling around the saloon in "Shane" and waiting for an opportunity to draw. When Carville watches Bush or Perot on television, you can see his eyes narrow, looking for a weakness, an opening. One of the strangest things about "The War Room" is how much fun it is to watch Carville watch TV. He's the most involved viewer you've ever seen, responding instantaneously to everything, good or bad, that flickers across the small screen; the images seem to pass directly

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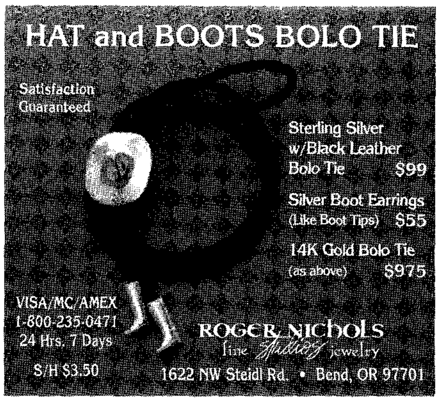

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into his bloodstream and his nervous system. His animation in these scenes is hilarious and often sort of scary; he looks like a man possessed. As intense as his reactions are—he whoops, he swears, he sputters—there's always something slightly opaque about them. You sense that he never forgets, even in the heat of the moment, to watch *himself*—that he gives free rein to his instincts because he considers them indistinguishable from those of the electorate. He's his own best object of study: when the body politic itches, he scratches himself.

Carville is, of course, a fanatic—a likable one, though. He may think of himself as the instrument of a greater entity, but when that entity is something as berserk and contradictory and entertaining as the American voting public it's hard to get too alarmed; in any event, he looks as if he were having an awfully good time being possessed. Although "The War Room" may not supply many new insights into the process of choosing a President, it gives us plenty of fresh data about the nature of political commitment, and it does justice, too, to the sheer reckless pleasure of electoral gamesmanship. Carville is the largest, most resonant character in recent American movies, someone whose work is such a complete expression of his personality that you can't help laughing: the unity of this life and this art is too good to be true. Pennebaker and Hegedus even shed light on Carville's most mysterious quality—the freakish intellectual clarity that produced "It's the economy, stupid." As you look at him, surrounded by phones, piles of papers, beer cans, bags of candy, and rather forlorn jars of vitamins, you realize that the disorder he creates around himself functions as a kind of challenge: he wallows in chaos for the greater joy of cutting through it, finding the principle that will make the whole unruly world of electoral politics suddenly lucid, simple. Near the end of the film, on the eve of the election, Carville addresses the exhausted staff with words a warrior might use. "I'm a political professional," he says. "That's what I do for a living. I'm proud of it." He's done his job, and now he'll move on to another campaign, and in this scene "The War Room" gives Carville's weird, peripatetic way of life an unexpected grandeur. We'd thought he was just a crazed mercenary, but he turns out to be a noble samurai in disguise. ♦

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"REBECCA," first published in 1938, was Daphne du Maurier's fifth novel. She began planning it at a difficult point in her life: it was only a few years after the death of her adored but dominating father, the actor-manager Gerald du Maurier; she was pregnant with her second child; and by the time she actually began writing, at the age of thirty, she was in Egypt, where her husband, Frederick A. M. (Boy) Browning, an officer in the Grenadier Guards, had been posted with his battalion. Du Maurier loathed Alexandria—her longing for England, and in particular for Cornwall, was, she wrote, like "a pain under the heart continually"—and she loathed the role forced upon her in Egypt by her marriage. Shy and socially reclusive, she hated the small talk and the endless receptions she was expected to give and to attend as a commanding officer's wife. Her homesickness and her resentment of these wifely duties, together with a guilty sense of her own ineptitude when performing them, were elements she incorporated into "Rebecca." She began writing it in the appalling heat of an Egyptian summer just a few months after the birth of her child and, after a false start she described as a "literary miscarriage," finally completed it on her return to England in the spring of the following year.

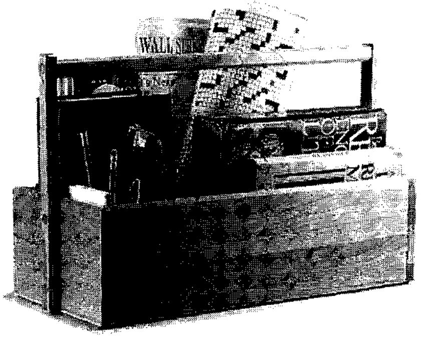
The late Daphne du Maurier gets a biography; her classic "Rebecca" gets a sequel.

CHRISTINA LEIGH

Du Maurier had already had some success as an author: her biography of her father, "Gerald: A Portrait," had been well received by critics, and her novel about Cornish wreckers, "Jamaica Inn," had been a best-seller; her publisher, Victor Gollancz, was eager for another. On receiving "Rebecca," Gollancz was jubilant; a "rollicking success" was forecast by him, by his senior editor, and by everyone to whom advance copies were sent. Prior to publication, du Maurier's was the only dissenting voice: she saw "Rebecca" as "psychological and rather macabre" and "a bit on the gloomy side," and she felt the ending was "a bit grim." Aware of the amount of money Gollancz was spending on promotion, she became anxious, fearing an "awful flop." Gollancz dismissed her fears, and it was he who was proved correct. "Rebecca," touted to booksellers for its "exquisite love-story" and its "brilliantly created atmosphere of suspense"—in short, promoted and sold as a gothic romance—became an immediate and overwhelming commercial success.

The novel went through twenty-eight printings in four years in Britain alone. It became a huge best-seller for du Maurier's United States publisher, Doubleday. It sold in vast numbers throughout Europe. And it continues to sell to this day: it has never been out of print in the fifty-five years since its publication. The scale of the novel's success in terms of sales is impossible to determine, for no cumulative figures exist, but at this level exact figures become unimportant. What is clear is that "Rebecca" long ago ceased to be merely a novel. Like Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind" (published two years earlier), "Rebecca" has made the strange and risky transformation from best-seller to cult to legend.

These two novels, unique in this century in popular fiction for their continuing fascination and réclame, could scarcely be more different. "Gone with the Wind" is a saga, painted with broad strokes on a huge canvas; "Rebecca" is brief, apparently



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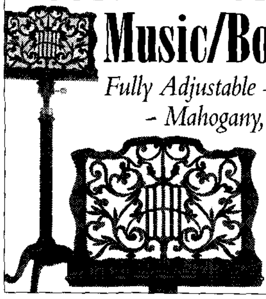

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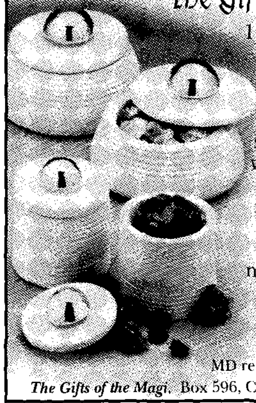

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narrow in focus, a nervy, dreamlike passage through the consciousness of its female narrator. Yet both novels are about women and property, Tara being the property of a father and Manderley that of a husband; and both concern themselves with female archetypes—with the polarity between the "good" and the "bad" woman (or the "Healer" and the "Destroyer," as du Maurier termed them). There are other points of coincidence, too, in their progress to their present, mythologized status. Both novels were produced as films by David Selznick, within a year of each other, and both the films won Oscars. ("Rebecca" won the award for best picture; Alfred Hitchcock, its director, did not receive an Oscar, though he created a haunting, eerie, and intuitive version of the book, which he was later to dismiss as a mere "novelette.") Both films did much to widen the readership of the novels on which they were based, and continue to do so; and both novels, as their fame increased, launched a secondary journalistic and literary industry, an avalanche of interviews, speculation, interpretation, and commentary. Neither Mitchell nor du Maurier welcomed this. Mitchell, who published only the one novel and died young, suffered the onslaught for thirteen years; du Maurier, the author of thirty-seven books, suffered it for more than fifty years, which is to say for the rest of her life.

Du Maurier died in Cornwall in 1989, shortly before her eighty-second birthday, and this brings us to the final resemblance in the history of the two novels and the two women: after du Maurier's death, as after Mitchell's, the literary industry attendant on her, far from dwindling, increased. This year sees the publication of the first authorized du Maurier biography, "Daphne du Maurier: The Secret Life of the Renowned Storyteller" (Doubleday; $25), by the English novelist Margaret Forster, and also the publication of a sequel to "Rebecca," which is entitled "Mrs. de Winter" (Morrow; $20) and was written by another English novelist of some skill and reputation, Susan Hill. Hill took on the task—a questionable one, this literary banditry—with the approval of the du Maurier family, and completed it in a mere three months. Her book, the fruit of a seven-figure publishing deal, comes hard on the heels of the sequel to "Gone with the Wind," entitled "Scarlett"—a novel of spectacular ineptitude, which sold on both sides of the Atlantic very nicely indeed.

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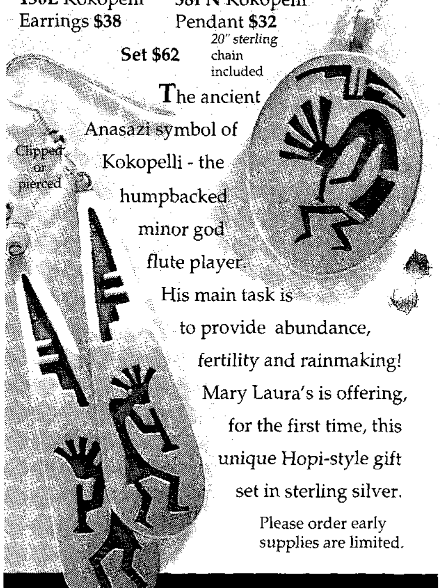

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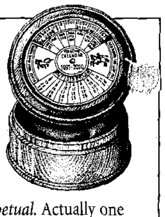

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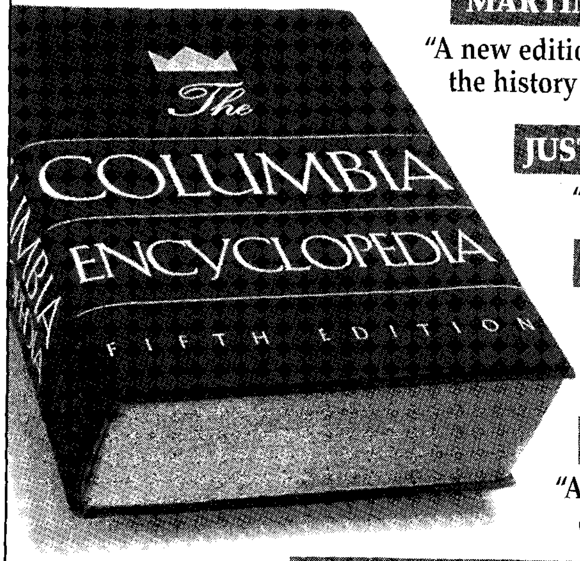
It might have been hoped that together the Forster biography and the Hill sequel could provoke a reëxamination of "Rebecca," by far du Maurier's best book, and a reappraisal of du Maurier as a writer. More particularly, now that feminist criticism has done much to unlock texts similar to "Rebecca," it might have been hoped that these books would free du Maurier from her classification as a "romantic novelist," a tag that is appropriate to some of her work but by no means all of it, and is singularly inapt for "Rebecca," a subtle, complex, and prescient novel, which employs the techniques of romantic fiction to produce a damning and subversive attack on the very notion of romance. Perhaps it was too much to ask. Forster's discursive but tart and schoolmarmish biography grazes the rich grass of the du Maurier meadow but fails to chew, let alone digest, the cud. It pays great attention to the lesbian episodes in du Maurier's life, but insufficient attention—one and a half paragraphs of analysis in the case of "Rebecca"—to the rather more important question of her work. Susan Hill, struggling with the legacy of a novel expertly shaped, and structured in such a way as to defy continuation, has produced a vapid, incoherent ghost of a book, stained by infirmity of purpose on every page. All the passion, anger, and ambivalence that make "Rebecca" so interesting have leached out. Hill, like Forster, appears to approach du Maurier, and "Rebecca," through a haze of preconceptions. Perhaps that is not surprising: the critical miasma surrounding du Maurier and her novels descended at "Rebecca" 's publication, and has rarely lifted since.

"REBECCA" is the story of two women, a man, and a house. Of the four, as Hitchcock once observed, the house, Manderley, is the dominant presence. Although it is never precisely located, its setting, so minutely detailed in the novel, is clearly that of Menabilly, an empty, half-ruined house in the woods above the sea in Cornwall. Du Maurier discovered it as a young woman, and she eventually lived there for over twenty years; the house lit her imagination and obsessed her for much of her life. Du Maurier's own term for Menabilly was the House of Secrets, and when she placed it at the heart of "Rebecca" (five years before she lived there) she created an elliptical, shifting, and deeply secretive book. The plot hinges



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upon secrets; the novel's milieu is that of an era and a social class that, in the name of good manners, rarely permitted the truth to be expressed; and suppression and a fearful secretiveness are its narrator's most marked characteristics.

By the time du Maurier wrote "Rebecca," she had mastered the tone and the techniques of popular fiction. Her novel came well disguised as best-seller material, an intriguing story of love and murder—a "page-turner," in modern parlance. But examine the subtext of "Rebecca" and you discover a perturbing, darker construct, part Grimm's fairy tale, part Freudian family romance. At the time of publication, these aspects of "Rebecca" went unnoticed. Whether praising or deriding the novel, many reviewers—almost all of them male—adopted a patronizing tone. To the harsher critics, "Rebecca" was, as the *Times* of London put it, a "novelette"; to the more indulgent, it was romance "in the grand tradition" or "a grand piece of story-telling." Many American reviewers, irritated by the echoes of "Jane Eyre," used Charlotte Brontë's superior gifts as a stick with which to beat du Maurier over the head. To pigeonhole du Maurier as the female author of an undemanding tale aimed primarily at an undiscerning female readership was convenient and lazy; relegating her to the waste bin of women's fiction (a category one notch higher than "servant-girl fiction") saved critics the bother of actually having to think. If du Maurier was surprised that the critics failed to notice the grim (or Grimm) aspects of "Rebecca," she remained quiet about it. She was already becoming inured to this type of response to her work. Two of her four previous novels fell within the category of historical romance, and had been promoted as such. Her first book, "The Loving Spirit," was launched in the United States with a puff from Rebecca West, who remarked, with double fatuity, that it was "a whopper of a romantic novel in the vein of Emily Brontë." Despite the fact that du Maurier's second and third novels defied any such classification, as did her short stories and some of her post-"Rebecca" novels, the tag "romantic novelist" stuck and has never been dislodged.

Thus was du Maurier categorized and "named" as a writer. The question of how we name and identify—and the ironies and inexactitudes inherent in that process—is central to "Rebecca." Both female characters—one dead, one alive—derive their

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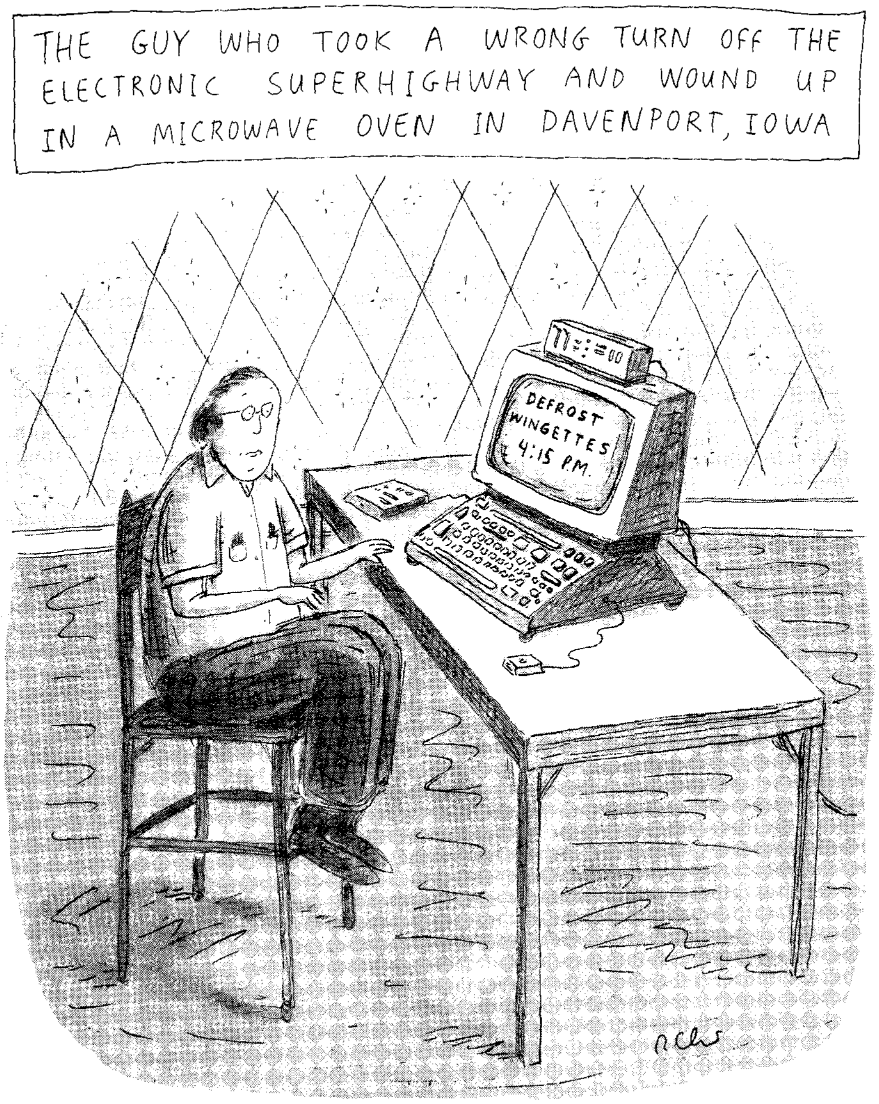

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surname, as they do their status, from their husband. The first wife, Rebecca, is vivid and vengeful and, though dead, indestructible: her name lives on in the book's title. The second wife, the drab, shadowy creature who narrates the story, remains nameless. We learn that she has a "lovely and unusual" name, and that it was bestowed upon her by her father; the only other identity she has was also bestowed by a man—she is a *wife*, she is Mrs. de Winter.

That a narrator perceived as a heroine should be nameless was a source of continuing fascination to du Maurier's readers. It also fascinated other writers—Agatha Christie corresponded with du Maurier on the subject—and throughout her life du Maurier was plagued with fan letters seeking an explanation. Her stock reply was that she found the device technically interesting. The question is not a trivial one, for it takes us straight to the core of "Rebecca"—and that may well be the reason du Maurier, a secretive woman and a secretive artist, avoided answering it.

THE unnamed narrator of "Rebecca" begins her story with a dream, with a first sentence that has become famous: "Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again." Almost all of the brief first chapter is devoted to the details of her dream: her progress up the long, winding drive, by moonlight, to Manderley itself. The imagery, of entwined trees and encroaching undergrowth that have "mated," is sexual; the style is scented and overwritten, that of a schoolgirl trying to speak poetically and struggling to impress. Moving forward with a sense of both anticipation and revulsion, the dream narrator first sees Manderley as intact; then, coming closer, she realizes that she is looking at a ruin, the shell of a house. With this realization,

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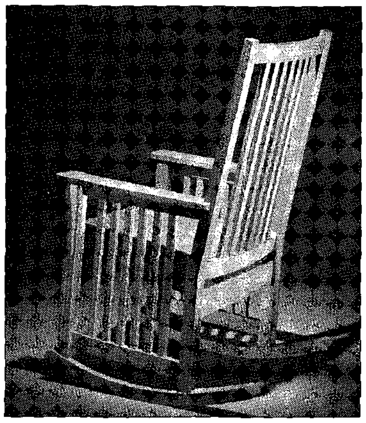

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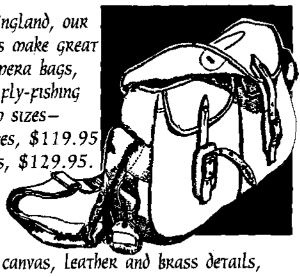

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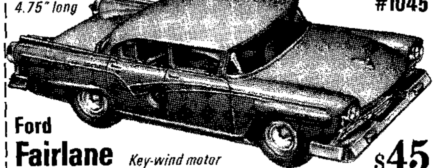

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the dreamer wakes. She confirms that the dream was accurate, for Manderley no longer exists.

She can now begin to tell her story, but she begins at the end, with herself and her husband, Maximilian de Winter, living in exile in Europe for reasons as yet unclear. Their activities, as they move from hotel to hotel, sound like those of two elderly expats. They follow the cricket scores, take afternoon tea; the wife selects dull newspaper articles to read aloud to her husband, since—again for reasons unexplained—both find dullness soothing and safe. The narrator describes a routine of stifling monotony, but does so in terms that are relentlessly optimistic and trite. It comes as a considerable shock to the reader to discover, as the story loops back to the narrator's first meeting with de Winter, that she is young. The lapse of time between this present and the past events she will describe is unspecified, but it is clearly only a few years, and this makes de Winter a man of about fifty and his childless, friendless narrator-wife around twenty-five. Their life in Europe is never mentioned again, and it is easy to forget, as the drama unfolds, that the aftermath for them is exile, ennui, and putting a brave face on a living death.

The plot of the rest of "Rebecca" will be familiar to many readers: the narrator, working as a paid companion in Monte Carlo, meets Maxim de Winter, the owner of the legendary Manderley and a widower twice her age. She marries him, goes with him to Manderley, and there becomes progressively obsessed with Rebecca, his first wife. Patching together a portrait of Rebecca in her mind, she creates a chimera, an icon of femininity: a woman who was the perfect hostess, perfect sexual partner, perfect chatelaine, and perfect wife. This image she later perceives as false, and, in discovering the truth about Rebecca's life, she also discovers the truth about her death. Rebecca did not drown in a yachting accident in the bay below, as everyone believes; she was killed by de Winter, who from the beginning of his first marriage loathed his wife.

The narrator, once enlightened, accepts without question de Winter's version of her predecessor as a promiscuous woman who was pregnant with another man's child when he killed her, and who taunted him that she would pass off this child as his. De Winter's confession is accompanied by a declaration of love—the first he has made to the narrator, despite their months of marriage. Overwhelmed by this, the narrator gives her husband immediate support. The rest of the novel, which is brilliantly plotted, concerns de Winter's efforts, with his loyal wife's assistance, to suppress the truth of the murder and thus escape the hangman. This he does, but not without cost. Returning to Manderley from London, with information that gives Rebecca a motive for suicide and therefore saves him, both partners are uneasy. De Winter senses impending disaster; in the back of the car, his wife is asleep, dreaming that she and Rebecca have become one, and that their hair—long and black, as Rebecca's was—is providing de Winter with a halter, or noose.

Mrs. de Winter dreams vividly twice in the novel, once at the beginning and once at the end; each time, the dream conveys a truth to her that her conscious mind cannot and will not accept. She prefers the sketchy and cliché-ridden visions she summons up when she daydreams—and she daydreams incessantly. The vision she has just had, of herself and Rebecca united, of first and second wives merged into one dangerous female avatar, she instantly pushes aside. Her husband halts the car on a crest above their home; the night sky beyond is lit with a red glow. (The color red is associated with Rebecca throughout the novel.) His wife assumes that it is the dawn, but de Winter understands at once that Manderley is burning.

This destruction of de Winter's ancestral home was prefigured in the dream with which the novel opened, and the literal agent of the destruction is far less important than its poetic agent, which is Rebecca. Like some avenging angel, Rebecca has marshalled the elements: she has risen from the sea to wreak revenge by fire—thus echoing, and not for the first time in the book, her literary ancestress the first Mrs. Rochester.

In this way, and very abruptly, the novel ends; it has come full circle. It is melodramatic in places, of course (even "Jane Eyre" cannot escape that criticism), but it is remarkable, given the plot, how consistently du Maurier is able to skirt melodrama. What interested her as a novelist can be summarized by the distinction Charlotte Brontë drew between writing that was "real" and writing that was "true." There *is* realism in "Rebecca"; the mores and speech patterns of the class and the era du Maurier is describing, for instance, are sharply observed. The elements that give "Rebecca" its force, however, owe nothing to realism; its power lies in its imagery,

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its symmetry, its poetry—and that poetry is intensely female. The plot of "Rebecca" may be as unlikely as the plot of a fairy tale, but that does not alter the novel's mythic resonance and psychological truth.

One way of reading "Rebecca" is as a love story, in which the good woman triumphs over the bad by winning a man's love: this version, which confirms cherished conventions rather than challenges them, is the one that the nameless narrator would like us to accept, and it is a reading that undoubtedly helped make "Rebecca" a best-seller. Another approach is to see the novel's imaginative links not just with earlier work by female authors ("Jane Eyre" being, indeed, the most obvious antecedent) but also with later work, and in particular with Sylvia Plath's late poems. "Rebecca" is narrated by a woman masochistic and desperate to be loved—a woman seeking an authoritarian father surrogate, or, as Plath expressed it, a "man in black with a Meinkampf look." Her search involves both effacement and abnegation, as it does for any woman who "adores a Fascist." She duly finds such a man in de Winter, whose last name indicates sterility, coldness, an unfruitful season, and whose Christian name—Maxim, as she always abbreviates it—is a synonym for a rule of conduct and is also the name of a weapon (a machine gun).

This woman, not surprisingly, views Rebecca as a rival; what she cannot perceive is that Rebecca is also her twin, and ultimately her alter ego. The two wives have actually suffered similar fates. Both were taken as brides to Manderley—a male preserve, as the first syllable of its name (like Menabilly's) suggests. Both were marginalized within the confines of the house—Rebecca in the west wing, with its view of her symbol, the sea, and the second wife in the east wing, overlooking a rose garden, that symbol of husbandry. The difference between them is in their reactions: the second wife submits, allowing her identity to be dictated by her husband, and by the class, attitudes, and value systems he embraces; the first wife has rebelled. Rebecca has dared to be an unchaste wife, to break the "rules of conduct" that Maxim lives by; her ultimate transgression is to threaten the system of primogeniture. That sin, undermining the entire patriarchal edifice that is Manderley, cannot be forgiven, and Rebecca dies for it.

The response of the narrator to Rebecca's rebellion is deeply ambivalent, and it is

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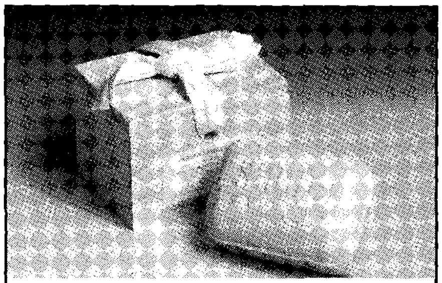

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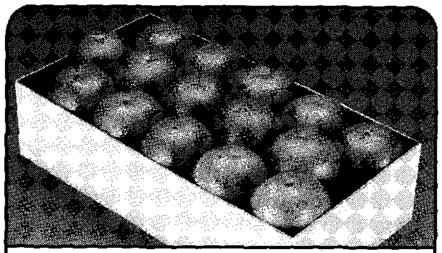

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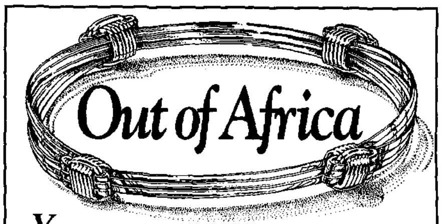
this ambivalence which fuels the novel. Her apparent reaction is that of a conventional woman of her time: abhorrence. Yet there are indications throughout the text that the second Mrs. de Winter would like to emulate Rebecca, even to be her. Although Rebecca is never seen, is dead, and has in theory been forever silenced, Mrs. de Winter's obsession with her insures that Rebecca will triumph over anonymity and effacement: even a bullet through the heart and burial at sea cannot quench her vampiric power. Again, one is reminded of Plath's embodiment of amoral, anarchic female force—"I rise with my red hair/And I eat men like air." Within the convention of a story, Rebecca's pallid successor is able to do what she dare not risk in everyday life: celebrate her predecessor.

The final twist of "Rebecca" is a covert one. De Winter kills not one wife but two. He kills the first with a gun; he kills the second by a slower, more insidious method. The second Mrs. de Winter's fate, for which she prepares herself throughout the novel, is to be subsumed by her husband. Following him into that hellish exile glimpsed at the beginning, she becomes again what she was when she met him—a paid companion to a tyrant. For humoring his whims and obeying his dictates, her recompense this time is love, not money, and the cost is her identity. This is the final irony of the novel, and the last of its many reversals. A story that attempts to bury Rebecca, the "unwomanly" woman, in fact resurrects her, while the voice that narrates this story is that of a ghost, a true dead woman.

THE themes of "Rebecca"—identity, doubling, the very different but intimately linked meanings of love and murder—recur again and again in du Maurier's work. That the circumstances of her own life were the source of many of those themes is unquestionable. Margaret Forster, in her biography, attempts to disentangle some of the possible influences: du Maurier's relationship with her father, who wished she had been a boy; the remoteness of her mother; the difficulties she encountered, as an unconventional and independent woman, in her marriage to a conventional and punctilious husband. Forster charts, in a dogged way, du Maurier's need to write and her simultaneous fear that to do so was somehow "unfeminine." She lights upon the image of the "boy-in-the-box"—which du Maurier used, often confusingly, to refer both to



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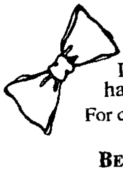

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the force that made her write and to the impulses that attracted her to women—but never examines the phrase, or its implications, very closely. That du Maurier saw creativity as masculine, and her own creativity as therefore aberrant (she described herself as a "half-breed"), explains much of the ambivalence in her texts and much of the anguish in her life. Forster does not delve very deeply into this material, and passes quickly over the work itself in favor of domestic trivia. Du Maurier's marriage is left so nearly unexplored that her husband remains faceless; little attempt is made to convey or understand Cornwall and what it signified for her; and, as for Menabilly, the house central to her identity, it is dealt with peremptorily, in a tone of puritanical disapproval. Menabilly is damp, cold, overlarge; it requires servants, and is unsuitable for small children. . . . This nannyish tone becomes wearing indeed. At any minute, one feels, Forster will recommend a hot bath and an early night to get all this foolishness out of du Maurier's system.

Du Maurier's life was, in many respects, as filled with paradoxes as her novels. As Forster recounts, she came from a family of artists: her mother was an actress, and her grandfather was the illustrator and writer George du Maurier, the author of "Trilby." She and her sisters grew up surrounded by writers and actors, who were their parents' close friends. Yet du Maurier married a career soldier in one of Britain's most élite regiments, a man who seems to have been a traditionalist to his fingertips. They met in highly charged circumstances when du Maurier was twenty-four and living in a house overlooking the Fowey River. Browning sailed his boat to Fowey in the hope of meeting her—he had read and admired her first novel. Du Maurier, already sexually experienced, was attracted to him immediately and was fully prepared to begin an affair; Browning found this proposal unthinkable and "sleazy." But their courtship was speedy: they met in April, 1932, and married that July. They shared a love of the sea and of boats; by the time they met, du Maurier was an accomplished sailor (as, it should be noted, is Rebecca). But as their long marriage wore on, their differences became more significant than their similarities. Browning—handsome, well groomed, apparently the perfect soldier—had been traumatized by his experiences in France in the First World War; he was plagued by minor physical ailments and by nightmares. He rapidly

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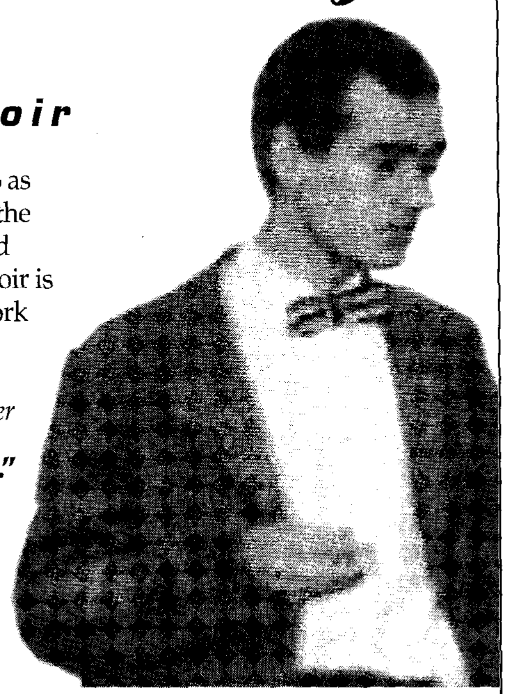

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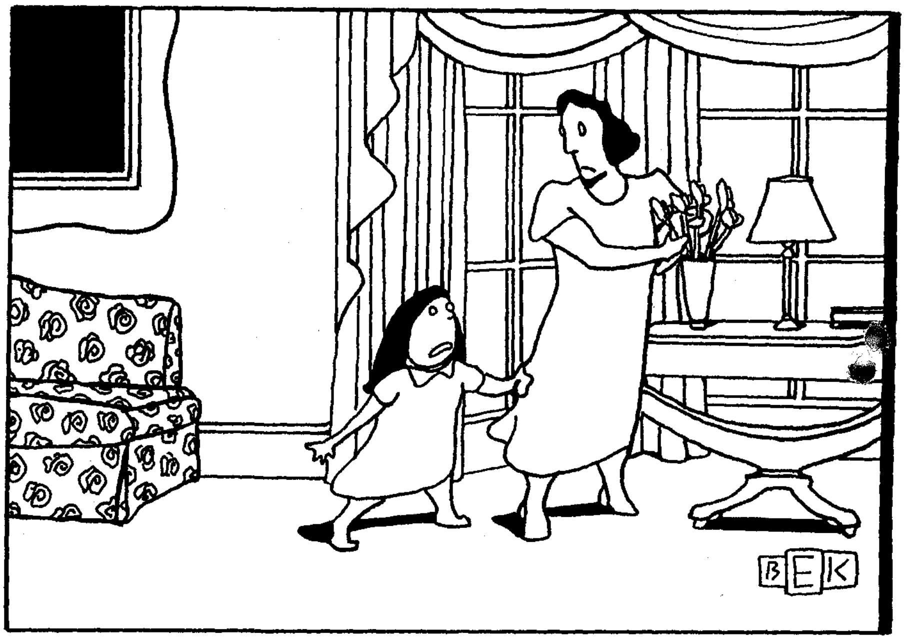

"When will I be old enough to start suing people?"

• •

became dependent on du Maurier for comfort and reassurance, while remaining a domestic martinet. Forster documents Browning's impatience when his wife could not hire a reliable cook or properly instruct housemaids, and notes that this intimidated du Maurier, but she fails to adequately analyze the underlying resentment—a resentment that du Maurier seems to have mostly concealed in her day-to-day life, but that clearly surfaces in her novels.

For most of her marriage to Browning, du Maurier provided the major source of income, financing their homes and the upbringing of their three children. Yet she was afflicted with guilt at her achievements, believing that women had to choose whether to "create after one's fashion, or be a woman and breed." She maintained that the "two don't go together and never will. Maybe there should be a rule against women who work marrying."

After the war, du Maurier's marriage became strained; there were infidelities on both sides. Browning began drinking heavily, and his moodiness increased, earning him the family nickname of Moper. For many years, he and du Maurier lived virtually separate lives, she at Menabilly and he in London. The resulting loneliness perhaps helped to propel du Maurier into a platonic affair with Ellen Doubleday (the wife of her American publisher) and then into a brief, less platonic affair with Gertrude Lawrence. Even so, throughout this postwar period, du Maurier remained essentially loyal to her husband, indulgent of his foibles, and protective of him and his reputation. In the meantime, du Maurier was becoming an immensely successful professional woman, the author of a sequence of best-sellers (of which, post-"Rebecca," "My Cousin Rachel," of 1951, is perhaps the most interesting). Du Maurier's books were known worldwide, yet she continued to eschew celebrity, usually refusing to make public appearances.

Browning died in 1965. Du Maurier spent the remaining twenty-four years of her life living alone in Cornwall—first at Menabilly and then at Kilmarth, its dower house. Du Maurier adapted well to widowhood at first, finding consolation in her children and later in her grandchildren. Then, in the mid-seventies, she suffered another kind of death: her ability to write began to fail her. Forster's account of these painful years, during which du Maurier closed in upon herself and in the end virtually willed her own death, makes up the strongest section of the biography. Forster writes with sympathy and understanding of that lonely decline, but the section is too brief and too long delayed to compensate for the tone that dominates earlier chapters.

Too often, one can sense a simmering class resentment in Forster's writing; it is as if she cannot bring herself to forgive du Maurier's bohemian but affluent up-

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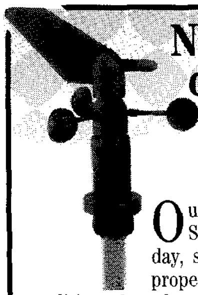

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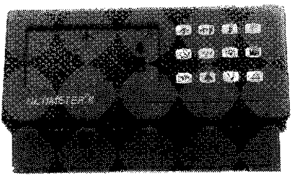

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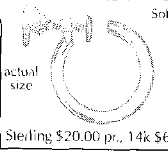

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bringing. Adopting a curiously dated and masculine set of values, she upbraids du Maurier for a host of tiny sins, for being unable to cook or sew, for employing nursemaids—all this unremarkable in a woman of that background and period. The portrait of du Maurier that ultimately emerges is of a self-centered, spoiled, and wayward woman. Du Maurier's lifelong generosity gets occasional grudging mention, but her freedom of spirit, her marked (and, for her era, extraordinary) independence, and the nature of her struggle as a writer are pushed to the margins.

This distortion is compounded by Forster's quasi-scholarly methodology. She was given every assistance by the du Maurier family and had extensive access to du Maurier's letters. These are duly quoted, but often with insufficient indication in the notes as to whether the quoted comments are contemporaneous with the period being discussed. Worse, du Maurier's own words are rarely quoted at any length; instead, they are chopped up, with interpolations from Forster, into the biographer's equivalent of sound bites. The effect is to silence du Maurier—and, on occasion, to turn her into a ventriloquist's dummy.

Ventriloquism, of course, was the task facing Susan Hill when she agreed to write her sequel to "Rebecca." Hill is a sensitive and interesting novelist with her own voice, so it is perhaps not unkind to say that in "Mrs. de Winter" she has failed. By opting for the obvious choice—continuing the story where du Maurier left off—Hill has overlooked a more challenging and potentially fruitful option: to provide, through a kind of prequel, that aspect of the story which du Maurier denied us, Rebecca's version of events. This approach—used with such great effect by Jean Rhys in "Wide Sargasso Sea," her account of Rochester's first marriage—has the great advantage of leaving the second author indebted to but free of the first. In the context of "Rebecca," the idea is not new; Antonia Fraser, to du Maurier's amusement, published "Rebecca's Story" in brief magazine form in 1976. In rejecting that option, Hill was forced to adopt a form of ghostwriting.

Facing this basic technical problem, Hill comes unstuck. Within a very few pages, it is apparent that her pastiche is superficial. She can convey some of the narrator's traits and tics—Mrs. de Winter's propensity for fantasizing, and the refuge she finds

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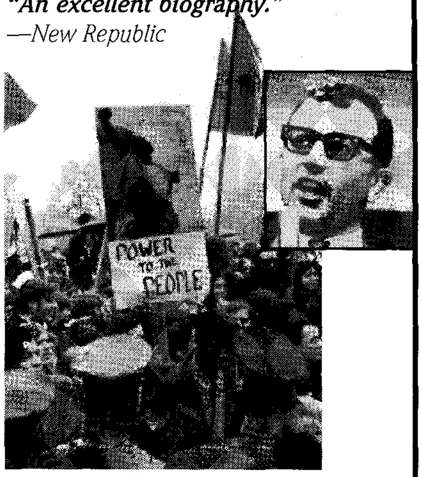

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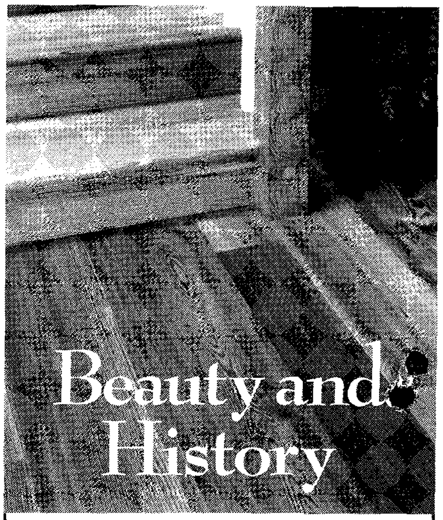
in truisms and banalities. What Hill cannot convey is this woman's deeply suppressed inner voice. There is no counterpoint here, as there is throughout "Rebecca"—no irony and little contradiction, no suggestion that what we are being given is the narrator's, but not the author's, version of events.

Hill has no Manderley to anchor her text, of course, and this loss of an imaginative domain is the second factor to undermine her. For much of her sequel, the de Winters continue their European odyssey. Pursued in theory by the furies of guilt and retribution, they take off for Scotland, Italy, the Rhine, even Turkey at one point, but the furies appear to lose interest in them, as does the reader, almost at once. For an unconscionable period, virtually nothing happens, and then Hill, with an air of desperation, abandons the guidebook prose and drags the de Winters back to England. She settles them in an unconvincing spot in the Cotswolds, reunites them with some secondary characters from "Rebecca," and from there squeaks through to her dénouement. The freneticism with which she changes location cannot disguise the fact that from beginning to end we are in a place far from the arena of "Rebecca" but only too identifiable—in stock theatre, where third-rate actors play weekly rep.

Readers interested in du Maurier would do well to ignore this travesty, and return to "Rebecca" and to du Maurier's other books. For those in search of a biography, Forster's account is readable enough, and until a more searching account is written this must serve as a stopgap. It is sad, and surprising, that two women, both novelists, should tangle with "Rebecca" yet continue to misconstrue it. Why has a reëxamination of "Rebecca" been delayed so long? It cannot be purely a matter of literary snobbery, for neither Forster nor Hill is a snob of that sort. Perhaps, as du Maurier herself sensed, the answer is that "Rebecca" is indeed a "grim" novel, raising issues about the weaknesses of their sex which women might well prefer to pass over. Feminism may have distanced modern readers from the attitudes of du Maurier's narrator and helped women to dissociate love from acquiescence, but their enfranchisement is hardly complete. The latest best-seller lists only confirm that the sly suggestion underlying "Rebecca" remains valid after fifty-five years: both in life and in bookstores, women continue to buy romance. ◆



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Consider This, Señora
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TWO Americans—a man in trouble with the I.R.S. and a woman hoping to forget her divorce—go into partnership to buy four *hectáreas* of land in rural Mexico, near the tiny village of Amapolas. They build some houses, which they sell to other travellers like themselves—people who have something they want to leave behind or who, like the Widow Bowles, the fiercest and most pleasing of the characters here, simply want to die somewhere interesting. Doerr, whose prose is spare and unassuming, charts a few years in the life of the quirky community spawned by this rather dreamy instance of real-estate speculation—a precise, squiggly map of the network of relationships between the eccentric newcomers and the Mexicans, who have been there forever. Some interesting marriages result, but Doerr doesn't try to force this hybrid group to cohere when its members want to drift off; instead, she keeps showing you that any map of human relationships must be redrawn almost weekly to keep up with the sporadic, willful, and complex needs of its subjects. (Two chapters of the novel originally appeared in these pages.)

GROUP PORTRAITS

The Warburgs
by Ron Chernow
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THE author of "The House of Morgan" has surpassed himself in this absorbing chronicle of another banking clan. In the sixteenth century, the Warburgs, German Jews, were small-town pawnbrokers and money changers; after moving to Hamburg, they transformed their family business into a bank that during the nineteenth century financed German industry, foreign trade, and foreign investment. In 1895, one Warburg scion married an American woman and moved to New York, establishing himself on Wall Street; the First World War separated the family, but affection returned with peace. Although as bankers the Warburgs were internationalists, as citizens they were patriots, and most of the German Warburgs were blind to the menace of Nazism. Yet they all escaped—with their fortunes diminished—just before the Second World War. Much of the book recounts the resurrection of Warburg banking in Europe after the war's end. In London, Siegmund George founded S. G. Warburg, which became one of the world's great international banks. A cousin, Eric, settled in Hamburg after buying back into the family bank, which had been confiscated under the Nazis, and helped finance German reconstruction. Chernow's colorful saga portrays dominating patriarchs, their equally bossy wives, feuding cousins, poor relations, and a huge cast of historic personages, but the author never forgets to explain specifically what the financiers did, so that the reader can understand the skills that go into investment banking.

Once They Moved Like the Wind
by David Roberts
(Simon & Schuster; $24)

IN the minds of white Americans, Cochise and Geronimo have retained a mythic place, shared only by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. Those names, and the myths they gave rise to, are reminders that you can become nostalgic about fear, just as you can become pious about guilt. Nostalgia, guilt, piety, and myth are the essence of all but a few Indian narratives. This history of Cochise, Geronimo, and the Apache wars is one of those few—a distinguished, responsible, and, almost inevitably, exciting retelling of a sordid tale. For nearly forty years, the territory that is now southern Arizona, southern New Mexico, and northern Mexico was the scene of a rolling tragedy marked by the perfidy of Americans and Mexicans and by the cruelty of the Chiricahua Apaches, under Cochise and then under Geronimo. To their contemporaries, the Chiricahua were "the keenest and shrewdest animals in the world, with the added intelligence of human beings." To Roberts, Geronimo is "one of the heroes of American history"; as his book demonstrates, there was nothing simple about Geronimo or the Chiricahua, nor is there anything simple about the measure of heroism they supply to a modern reader.

Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family
by Lauren Kessler
(Random House; $25)

MASUO YASUI arrived in the United States in 1903, when he was sixteen, and worked building railroads. By 1908, he and his two brothers had saved enough to open a store in Hood River, Oregon. Masuo, who had become an English-speaking Methodist, served as a leader of and go-between for later Japanese immigrants; he prospered, married, bought land, and began putting his American sons and daughters through college and graduate school. Then the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor: Masuo was arrested; his wife and the children still at home were "relocated"; and his business was ruined. The Yasui family found the hostility of friends, schoolmates, and neighbors as shocking as the government's persecution, and after the war only one of the eight children returned to Hood River. One son, Minoru, who had become a lawyer, brought a historic test case challenging the legality of the government's wartime treatment of Americans of Japanese ancestry, and became a leader in the successful campaign for redress. Kessler feels that the contemporary view of Japanese-Americans as "the model minority" is more racist than flattering, but the Yasuis are indeed models of courage and kindness. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

GREAT PRETENDERS

BY MARK LEYNER

REPORTS out of Mississauga, Ontario, a suburb of Toronto, tell of a real-estate developer who is hiring actors and models to play happy homeowners at its Windermere Gate development—to waltz through living rooms, bake cookies and play backgammon, and sip coffee on verandas, their mountain bikes propped on railings, in an effort to portray Windermere Gate as a merry locus of genteel conviviality and aerobic leisure.

This represents, I suspect, only the tip of the iceberg. There's never just one cockroach, as they say. In fact, we inhabit a world of surrogates, poseurs, double agents, undercover cops, body snatchers, and Stepford spouses. Who do you think those "relatives" are at weddings who don't seem to know either the groom's family or the bride's? Or those "guests" at parties who frantically stuff their mouths with canapés when they're asked to explain how they met their hosts? I'll tell you. Card-carrying Equity and Screen Actors Guild members—that's who.

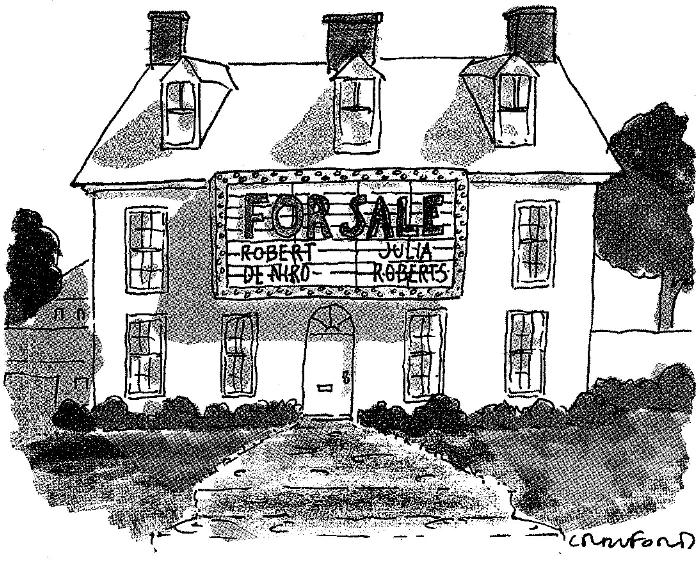
What about that couple moaning orgasmically as they scarf down the pricey pabulum at some bistro of the moment; or those tautly ponytailed Amerasians accoutred in charcoal and black sprawling sullenly across Philippe Starck plumbing-fixtures-as-love-seats in the lobbies of fashionable hotels; or those audience members weeping inconsolably or laughing themselves into femoral-artery hemorrhages at the coming attractions for a movie that's obviously headed for video release in the Punjab at the speed of light? Mercenary thespians, one and all.

In all fairness, I must admit that I'm guilty of engaging in occasional recreational dissimulation myself. Whereas some guys like to go off fly-fishing or spelunking or cuckolding Iowans, I like to catch some R. and R. by renting a small office in some sleepy Southern town and posing as a dermatologist. Give me a week of excising cysts, incising carbuncles, chemabrading acne scars, and lasering away spider veins, and I'm completely refreshed, revitalized—eager to plunge back into the slash-and-burn, eat-your-young battlegrounds of the New York literary scene.

So we need to acknowledge the ubiquity of dissemblance. Those deinstitutionalized gentlemen riding the subways in three-piece suits and "reading" inverted week-old newspapers are merely more unabashed in their masquerade than most of us. Who hasn't made one of those racked 3 A.M. admissions of fraudulence? "I'm not the savvy arbitrageur that everyone thinks I am—I'm just good at pretending to be one." Or "I'm not a good [Mom] [Dad] [Son] [Daughter]—it's all an act." Or "If people only knew that beneath this façade of congeniality and generosity was a purulent misanthrope making do with 'Court TV' until the advent of televised executions!"

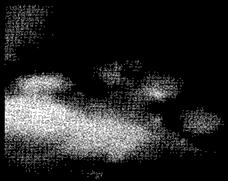
If dissembling is a pervasive mode of social and commercial intercourse today, what tactical countermoves are at our disposal? Well, let's take the Windermere Gate case. I suggest that buyers' brokers hire their own actors to attend open-house showings and scour the units grumbling things like "Isn't that a termite egg?" or sniffing the air in the cellar and asking "Is that mustard gas?" That should knock the asking price down a few thousand bucks.

If we all shift to the simulacrum, then the simulacrum, for all practical purposes, becomes the real. (I am violating a solemn blood oath I made at the age of eight. One night, several friends and I hiked to the old hydroelectric plant on the outskirts of town; we cut our fingers and pledged never to use any word associated with French deconstruction, including "liminal," "endo-colonization," and "simulacrum." Sorry, guys.) Then, at some juncture, one of us who's, say, pretending to be fat will decide to actually become fat, in order to more effectively play that role. This will engender a mass movement from the simulated back to the real—a movement sometimes called the "De Niroization" of culture. These migratory shifts back and forth between reality and simulacrum will calibrate the rest of history.



Hey, I have an idea: You play the sophisticated, erudite reader—prosperous, well travelled, tanned, and fit—whose esemplastic (sorry, guys) apprehension of the text is an art form in and of itself. I'll play the elegant, mordantly witty belletrist whose writing combines the delicacy and voluptuousness of poetry with the rigor of science and the vivacity of jai alai.

All right? Good. Now, from the top . . . ♦



That little map wasn't
worth two dead flies.

You said turn left.

Right like turn right
or right like not wrong?

Right.

You know what I mean.
See ya at the clubhouse.

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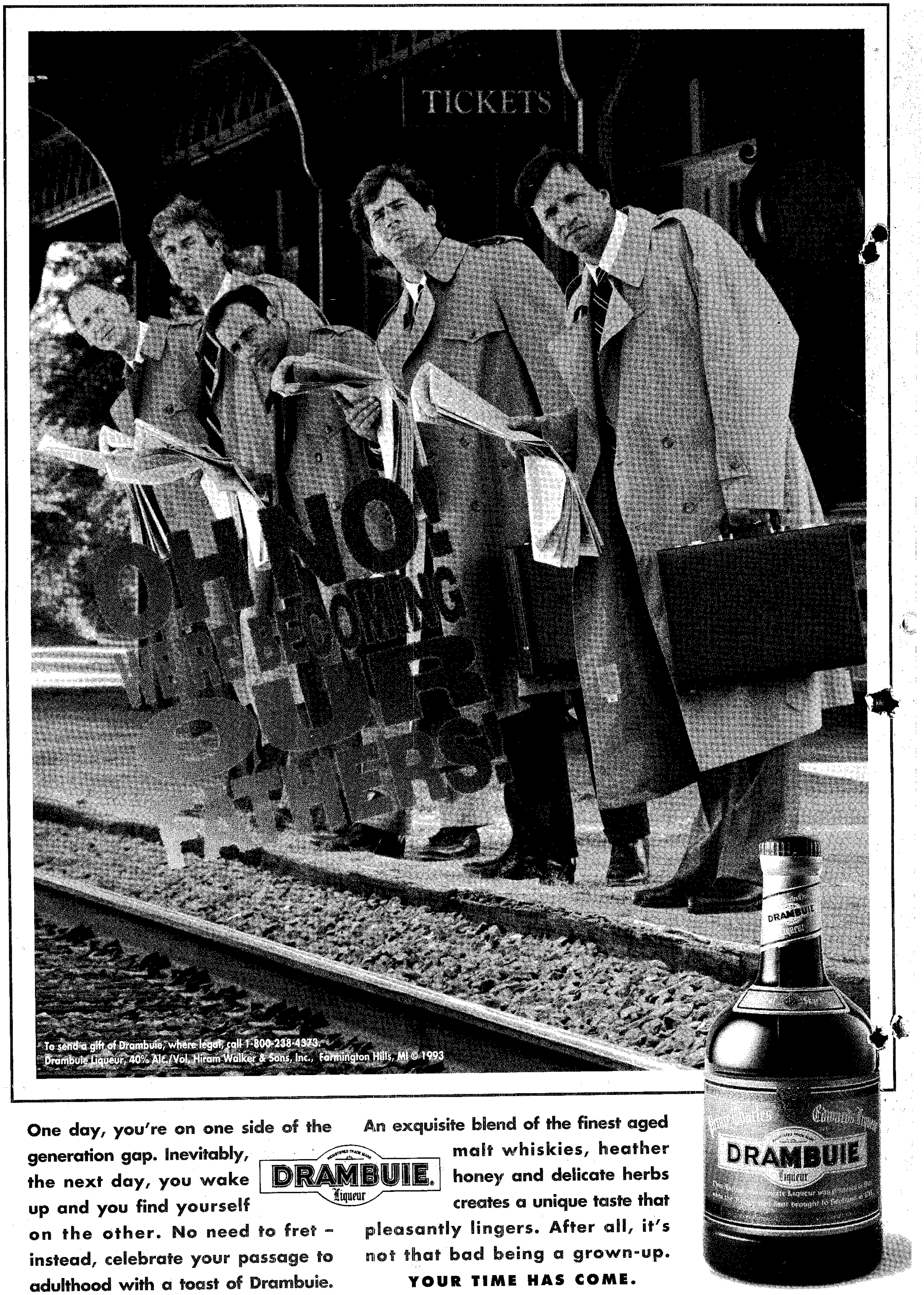

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